

A Study of Underrepresented Minorities in the Dental Hygiene Profession

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Abstract

There is a lack of ethnic and racial diversity in the dental hygiene profession across the United States. Recruitment efforts have been ineffective in increasing the number of underrepresented minorities (URM) in the profession.

This study explored the motivations of Ohio and Pennsylvania URM individuals to enter the profession of dental hygiene, their experiences in the profession and recruitment, and efforts to increase the number of URM students.

This descriptive, mixed method study included two phases of data collection. In January, 2016, questionnaires were sent electronically to 24 dental hygiene program directors with a 37% response rate, and to 1,289 dental hygienists with a response rate of 22%. The second phase of the study included confidential, personal, in-depth interviews with 17 registered dental hygienists who identify as URM dental hygienists.

Responses from the dental hygiene questionnaire report that the most common reason for choosing the profession of dental hygiene was referral from a dental professional or prior dental assisting experience (52.03%). The most highly recommended recruitment efforts to expose URM students to the dental hygiene profession included increasing the public's image about the profession (7.41%), and recruiting high school students (18.52%).

Analysis of the in-depth interviews with URM dental hygienists revealed that visiting high schools for career day, using social media to market to millennials, and utilizing alternative admission criteria such as student interviews or life experiences as part of their application were suggested as recruitment strategies to target URM students.

Enhanced recruitment techniques are needed to increase the number of URM students into the dental hygiene profession.

Dedication

In memory of Dr. Joseph Pavalko, my father and mentor.

To Mary Ann Pavalko, my mother and role model.

You have inspired me to do more than I ever thought I could.

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Chapter 1

In 2013, the dental hygiene profession celebrated its 100th anniversary. Approximately 6,700 dental hygienists graduate in the United States, annually, with a certificate, associate, or bachelor's degree (American Dental Hygienists' Fact Sheet, 2012). Since 1913, the dental hygiene profession has contributed to improving the oral health of Americans by graduating competent dental hygienists who are trained in the skills necessary to provide preventive oral health care services.

Dental hygienists are licensed professionals in all 50 states. To become licensed as a dental hygienist, an individual must graduate from an accredited program and pass all required written and clinical board exams. The average dental hygiene program requires 84 hours of coursework and three or more years to complete (American Dental Hygienists' Association [ADHA]). A dental hygienist works in conjunction with a dentist, in a private or public dental facility, to provide comprehensive, oral health care services.

There is a relationship between oral health and the overall health of the body. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), reported on the relationship between oral health and general health problems, such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. The CDC released a report titled, *A National Call to Action to Promote Oral Health* which identified five specific actions to promote oral health and prevent disease for all. Action four calls to “increase oral health workforce diversity, capacity, and flexibility” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003 p. 23). Studies on the recruitment and retention in the dental profession have been primarily on the experiences of dental students (Andersen et al., 2007; Formicola, D'Abreu, & Tedesco, 2010; Lopez, Wadenya, & Berthold, 2000;

McCants, 2011; McClain, Jones, McClain, & Curd, 2013). There is a paucity of existing research on the most effective strategies to recruit racial and ethnic minority students into the dental hygiene profession.

Statement of the Problem

While the dental hygiene profession has existed for over 100 years, the ethnic and social make-up of its members has not kept up with the increased racial and ethnic diversity of the United States. This lack of diversity impacts adequate access to oral health care for minorities in our society.

The lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the dental hygiene profession is well documented. A national survey completed in 1998, on diversity among dental hygiene students and faculty, concluded that the ratio of minority students in dental hygiene programs is disproportionately low compared to the number of minority citizens in the U.S (Dhir, Tishk, Tira, & Holt, 2002). A 2014 U.S. dental hygiene program directors' survey, conducted by the ADA, showed 4.3% of dental hygiene students were Black/African American, 11.5% of students were Hispanic/Latino, and 71.7% were White. The 2010 census data reported that in Youngstown, Ohio, the Black or African American population was 45.2%, Hispanic or Latino 9.3%, and Whites were 47%. In Ohio, Whites comprised 82.7 % of the population, Hispanic or Latino 3.1 %, while Black or African American were 12.2% (Youngstown [city] QuickFacts from the US Census Bureau, n.d.). Despite the growing racial and ethnic diversity of the general population, minorities remain underrepresented in the dental hygiene profession. This disparity exists on a local, state, and national level.

When a lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the profession exists, it translates into a lack of minority dental educators, negatively impacting access to oral healthcare services for diverse populations (Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General (Executive Summary), n. d.). According to the 2013-2014 American Dental Education Survey of Faculty in Dental Hygiene Programs, 87.2% of faculty are White, 3.8% are Black, and 4.2% Hispanic (Faculty : American Dental Education Association, n. d.). An article by Gates et al. (2013) reported on the underrepresentation of minority dentists in dental education. The lack of racial and ethnic diversity among dental school educators presents an obstacle for the mentoring of new faculty with diverse backgrounds. The lack of ethnic, social, and cultural diversity among dental hygienists in the U.S. presents a barrier to the access of oral healthcare among diverse populations. A report titled *Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General* (CDC, n. d.) concluded that Americans were unaware of the connection between oral health and general health and well-being. Even though improvements have been made toward reducing the extent and severity of oral diseases, a disparity in access to care among minorities exists (Sullivan, 2004). There is a marked disparity in oral health treatment among racial and socioeconomic groups. Improving racial and ethnic diversity among dental hygiene professionals is a promising solution to this problem.

Purpose of the Study

In light of the above discussion, a central theme emerges for further investigation. As mentioned, there is a lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the dental health profession. Dental hygiene educational programs report a lack of racially and ethnically diverse individuals applying to and graduating from dental hygiene programs.

Additionally, research shows that the lack of diversity impacts the public's access to oral health care. More efforts are needed to identify recruitment efforts that will effectively increase minority enrollment. Understanding both the detractors and attractors for minorities who enter dental hygiene is imperative to improving recruitment efforts.

Recognizing that a lack of racial and ethnic diversity exists, acknowledging how it impacts oral healthcare, and developing strategies to improve recruitment of minorities, have made an impact on increasing diversity in the dental hygiene profession, but, they have not eliminated the need to study further. There is a lack of evidence in the existing literature to identify reasons why more minorities do not choose dental hygiene as an occupation. Additionally, limited studies were found that looked at the use of recruitment and retention strategies in combination to address the diversity dilemma.

The purpose of this investigation is to explore the motivation of racially and ethnically diverse dental hygienists and identify best practices to improve the recruitment of students into the profession. The geographic focus of this study will be Eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania because the Youngstown State University (YSU) dental hygiene program primarily recruits students from these locations. This study will use questionnaires e-mailed to dental hygienists in Ohio and Pennsylvania to identify motivations of dental hygienists' decisions to choose dental hygiene as a career. Second, this investigation will conduct interviews of practicing, minority dental hygienists in Ohio and Pennsylvania to explore what factors were integral in their interest of dental hygiene, as well as understand what they perceive as the most effective recruitment strategies to improve diversity in dental hygiene. Finally, this investigation will explore

these dental hygienists' experiences in the professional setting, and their perceived role in the recruitment efforts to improve diversity in dental hygiene.

Research Questions

1. What are the similarities between practicing racially and ethnically diverse individuals and non-diverse individuals as to what motivated them to choose dental hygiene as a field of study?
2. What are the differences between practicing racially and ethnically diverse individuals and non- racially and ethnically diverse individuals as to what motivated them to choose dental hygiene as a field of study?
3. What factors most likely impact choosing dental hygiene as a career, such as the influence of a mentor or role model or participation in recruitment events?
4. What are the opinions and experiences of minority dental hygienists on ways to improve the recruitment and retention of minority dental hygiene students?

Significance of the Study

This investigation will provide a valuable contribution into the reasons why URM students pursue dental hygiene as a career, experiences of URMs in the professional setting, and what can be done to encourage more URMs to apply to dental hygiene programs. This research will make contributions in the field of dental hygiene and diversity in several ways. It will contribute to the knowledge base by identifying motivating factors racially and ethnically diverse individuals report in their decision to choose dental hygiene as a profession. Dental hygiene education programs may also benefit by gaining new insights into identifying effective recruitment techniques to recruit individuals with diverse backgrounds into the dental hygiene profession.

Conclusions from this study can be generalized to other dental hygiene programs with similar population demographics.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations are inherent to any research project. This study will include a select number of subjects; therefore, it will not be representative of the entire population of minority dental hygiene. In an effort to represent a larger perspective, a questionnaire will be distributed to dental hygienists. The nature of the interviews and content of the questions may pose some limitations. Participants may not feel comfortable openly sharing their responses with the researcher. Participants will be assured that their identities will not be recorded in any reporting of this investigation.

Potential delimitations exist because of the design of the investigation. A history threat, such as a historical event, may occur that would affect the outcome of the study. For example, a Supreme Court ruling concerning diversity that makes the national news may impact a respondent's awareness of diversity. A more likely threat to occur in this study would be a selection bias. Because this study is looking primarily at the reporting of dental hygienists with culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds, finding a large enough sample may be difficult since racial and ethnic diversity is low in the profession.

Limitations may occur with the interview questions, recording of responses, and the manner in which the questions are worded. If the questions are interpreted as *leading* the subject for certain answers, or as threatening to the subject, honest answers may not be given, or the subjects may not participate. Additionally, subjects from diverse backgrounds may be more likely to complete the interviews because it is a topic they can relate to, while some may not be interested in the topic, and fail to comply altogether. All

of these threats should be recognized when designing the study. The results may not be generalized to the overall population when only a small part of the population is surveyed.

Definition of Terms

Access to care – the availability of dental care and the willingness of the patient to obtain that care (Gulliford, Figueroa-Munoz, Morgan, Hughes, Gibson, Beech, & Hudson, 2002).

Dental hygienist – a licensed professional who is trained to provide preventive, dental related services and care under the supervision of a dentist (American Dental Association, 2005).

Diversity - the inclusion of different types of people from different races or cultures (Merriam-Webster, 2015).

Ethnicity – refers to groups whose members identify with each other on the basis of common nationality or shared cultural traditions (the freedictionary.com, 2015).

Race – refers to the concept of identifying groups as distinct because of physical or genetic traits shared by the group (the freedictionary.com, 2015).

Underrepresented Minority (URM) – may refer to a group, small in number, that has limited access to social, economic, or political power (thefreedictionary.com, 2015).

Summary

The following review of the literature will demonstrate evidence of the low representation of URM dental hygienists compared to the number of minorities nationally, a discussion on why this issue is important, what impact it has on access to oral health and overall health, impact on the profession, and dental hygiene education.

The review will outline past efforts and policy initiatives to improve diversity, the reasons this dilemma still exists, and what still needs to be done.

Several approaches and multiple research databases were used to locate relevant studies regarding the lack of diversity in the dental hygiene profession using the keywords *dental hygiene* in combination with *diversity*, *minority*, *recruitment*, and *retention*. Websites of professional organizations, including the American Dental Association (ADA), the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA), and American Dental Education Association (ADEA) were also searched for information on diversity enrollment and diversity initiatives using similar keywords.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The profession of dental hygiene has existed for over 100 years, yet, the ethnic and social make up of its members has not kept up with the increased diversity of the U.S population. According to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau statistics, in 2020, African Americans will increase to 13%, and other minorities, including Hispanics, will increase to 26% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). By 2050, Blacks are projected to be 14.6%, and Hispanics 24.4% of the U.S population (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). The percentage of underrepresented minorities entering dental hygiene education programs continues to remain significantly lower than that of the general population. The low diversity is evidenced by the enrollment of first-year dental hygiene students in U.S. dental hygiene schools, from 2001 to 2014, compared to URM's in the general population provided in Table 1.

Table 1. *Total Enrollment of Students in U.S. Dental Hygiene Programs by Number and Percentage*

Academic Year	White		Black		Hispanic		American Indian		Total Number of Students
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
2001-2002	10,679	83.3%	479	3.7%	774	6.0%	98	.7%	12,826
2002-2003	10,728	84.4%	523	4.0%	832	6.4%	90	.7%	13,016
2003-2004	10,842	81.6%	543	4.2%	878	6.8%	94	.7%	13,284
2004-2005	11,102	79.9%	585	4.2%	948	6.8%	105	.8%	13,895
2005-2006	11,238	80.2%	553	4.0%	941	6.7%	99	.7%	14,012
2006-2007	11,728	79.3%	619	4.2%	1110	7.5%	111	.8%	14,795
2007-2008	11,857	79.0%	651	4.3%	1096	7.3%	127	.8%	15,010

2008-2009	11,950 78.7%		670 4.4%	1112 7.3%	93	.6%	15,194
2009-2010	(Unavailable)						
2010-2011	11,725	75.5%	640 4.1%	1377 8.9%	109	.7%	15,521
2011-2012	11,679	74.1%	647 4.1%	1512 9.6%	96	.6%	15,771
2012-2013	11,784	72.5%	726 4.5%	1709 10.5%	91	.6%	16,256
2013-2014	11,588	71.7%	690 4.3%	1860 11.5%	105	.6%	16,162
U.S. population, 2014	77.7%		13.2%	17.1%	1.2%		

Note. Table 1 Source: Student numbers and percentages based on data from the American Dental Association’s Survey of Allied Dental Programs. U. S. population percentages are based on U.S. Census Bureau’s State and country quick facts retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>

The racial breakdown of residents in Ohio and Pennsylvania, the two states that YSU primarily recruits from, is only slightly different from the national statistics, and is reported in Table 2.

Table 2. 2013 Ohio, Pennsylvania, and U.S. Population Estimates URM

	White	Black	Hispanic
Ohio	83.2%	11.5%	3.4%
PA	83.2%	12.5%	6.3%
U.S.	77.7%	13.2%	17.1%

Note. Table 2 Source: U.S. Census Population estimates retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>

A dental hygienist is a licensed, healthcare professional who works independent of, or, alongside dentists and other health professionals. Dental hygienists specialize in the provision of services that focus in the prevention and treatment of oral diseases. Licensure varies from state to state, but most require a two-year degree and passage of a written and clinical examination. Educational programs for dental hygienists vary from two-year to four-year programs. Currently there are 244 associate degree programs and 91 baccalaureate programs in the United States (American Dental Hygienists’ FactSheet,

2012). While most dental hygienists work in private practice dental settings, many choose to work in other settings, such as independent practice, research, education, sales, schools, or nursing facilities.

Recently, states have recognized the need to allow dental hygienists to expand their scope of practice beyond the tradition dental setting to improve access to dental hygiene services for minority and low income populations. Several states have passed legislation allowing direct access for dental hygiene services. Direct access refers to the ability of a dental hygienist to provide services without the authorization of a dentist. Only a handful of states allow direct access to oral health care between a dental hygienist and the patient (Direct Access | ADHA, n. d.). Some states have policies that allow varying levels of autonomy for dental hygienists. By law, Ohio dental hygienists, upon completing the necessary requirements, may provide services for patients without the employing dentist present. This flexibility allows dental hygienists to expand oral health care to individuals who face barriers to accessing dentistry. The variety of options for dental hygienists to deliver oral health care to individuals has the greatest benefit to underserved populations (Innovative Workforce Models | ADHA, n. d.). Nursing homes, dental professional shortage areas, schools, and health departments may all benefit from less restrictive dental practice act guidelines and improve access to care. These alternative workforce models continue to evolve and have the potential to improve access to oral health care services to minorities. Nonetheless, effective and deliberate recruitment strategies must remain a priority for the dental hygiene profession to reflect the growing minority populations in the U.S. and improve oral health for all Americans.

History of Dental Hygiene

A historical review re-constructed from the American Dental Hygienists' Association's dental hygiene timeline highlighted the important events and defining moments in the evolution of the dental hygiene profession that has existed for over 100 years (Timeline | ADHA, n. d.). A brief historical timeline of the evolution of the dental hygiene profession will highlight significant milestones in the profession. The term "dental hygienist" was first established by Dr. A. C. Fones, in 1913, in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Dr. Fones was a dentist who saw the importance of preventive dental care, such as the removal of stains and deposits from the teeth. He felt this term most accurately described one who is skilled in the science of health and the prevention of disease (Fones, 2013). In November, 1914, the first class of dental hygienists graduated and worked in public schools. In 1915, the first dental hygienist was employed in a hospital setting.

As dental hygiene programs began to expand in the U.S., educational requirements to become a licensed dental hygienist were established at Columbia University in 1916. In 1917, the first dental hygiene association was created and led by Irene Newman, the first licensed dental hygienist. By 1920, six states had licensed dental hygienists. In 1923, the American Dental Hygienists' Association was organized with 46 members (Timeline | ADHA, n. d.). By 1926, 30 states had added dental hygiene programs in the U.S., but it was not until 1935 that one of the requirements for licensure was "high school graduate." While most of the programs were one to two years in length, the University of Michigan offered the first baccalaureate degree in dental hygiene in 1939.

As the profession continued to expand, “Registered Dental Hygienist” was coined as the official credential of the profession by the ADHA in 1949. In 1951, the ADA Council on Dental Education established the curriculum and minimum standards for dental hygiene education, followed by the first accreditation of dental hygiene programs in 1952 (American Dental Association- History Timeline, n.d.). In 1957, membership restrictions to the ADHA, based on race and color, were deleted, and in 1964, the word “female” was deleted from the ADHA constitution and bylaws. In 1965, the first male student graduated from the University of New Mexico. In 1998, the California legislature created policies to permit dental hygienists to provide unsupervised oral care and preventive services to special populations in alternative settings. In 1999, New Mexico dental hygienists were allowed to own or manage their own practice according to a collaborative agreement with a dentist, rather than being supervised. In 2003, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published a report on oral health in America, emphasizing the full meaning of oral health and its importance to general health. To address the issue of lack of access to dental care, the ADHA in 2004, adopted a policy to pursue the creation of a mid-level provider in dental hygiene known as the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner ([ADHP] American Dental Hygienists’ Association Draft Dental Competencies for the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner, 2007). Minnesota became the first state to license students under the ADHP model in 2011.

The history of the profession of dental hygiene has evolved from a very restrictive practice model to one in which dental hygienists are able to practice under less supervision. All of these efforts to provide dental hygienists with more autonomy are in response to the access to oral health care crisis in the U.S.

Midwestern Urban Dental Hygiene Program

In Youngstown, Ohio, during the early 1970s, the Mahoning Valley Health Planning Association indicated a need for dental hygienists. Members of the Corydon Palmer Dental Society substantiated the findings that there were less than 10 dental hygienists in the tri-county area (Columbiana, Mahoning, and Trumbull Counties), which had 250 dentists. A Dental Hygiene Advisory Committee, consisting of local dentists, was appointed and a proposal for a new dental hygiene program was submitted to and approved by the Ohio Board of Regents. In the fall of 1976, the program accepted its first class. Throughout the years, the program has flourished and evolved. In 2015, there are over 400 licensed, dental hygienists in the tri-county area (Ohio.gov., n. d.). Today, the students' academic preparation includes providing preventive services to the public in the YSU dental hygiene clinic, and in clinical sites in the region. The YSU dental hygiene program is a selective program, and, each year, accepts the most academically qualified students from a list of applicants. Each year, up to 24 students are accepted into the program. Acting on the 1986 recommendation of the ADHA to establish the baccalaureate degree as the minimum educational requirement, YSU created the bachelor's degree in dental hygiene program. In 2013, the first bachelor degree was accepted and in 2014, the last associate degree class graduated. In 2015, YSU graduated its first class of students with a Baccalaureate Degree in Dental Hygiene. In the past 15 years, few minority students have completed the program, as seen in Table 3. Since 2000, 90.68% of students were White, 1% Black, 1.2% Hispanic, and 6% were of unknown race/ethnicity.

Table 3. Number of Graduates from YSU Dental Hygiene Program by Race/Ethnicity, 2000-2015

Term	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Nonres	Unknown	White	Total
2000			1		1	21	23
2001					1	16	17
2002					1	22	23
2003						20	20
2004	1					15	16
2005		1			2	16	19
2006					3	21	24
2007					1	23	24
2008			1		3	18	22
2009					1	21	22
2010	1	1		1	1	18	22
2011					5	15	20
2012						19	19
2013		1				17	18
2014			1		1	22	24
2015			1			8	9
Grand Total	2	3	4	1	20	292	322

Note. Source: YSU Institutional Statistics and Analytics

The lack of minority, dental hygiene providers has been linked to a disparity in oral health care among minority people in the U.S. In 2004, the first Surgeon General's Report on oral health in America was released which reported on the epidemic of oral disease in the U.S. This report highlighted the fact that, not only was there a great deal of untreated oral disease, but, the burden of disease was disproportionately borne by minorities (Sullivan, 2004). Achieving diversity in the dental workforce is needed to improve access to health care for the medically underserved, improve cultural competence of the healthcare workforce, and increase the representation of minority leaders in the health professions.

Over the last two decades, researchers have studied the lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the dental hygiene profession. These studies have focused on affirming the lack of diversity, recognizing the impact this lack of diversity has on the U.S. population, identifying the effect low minority representation has on the profession, and

recommending ways to improve this disparity (Carr, Ennis, & Baus, 2010; Dhir et al., 2002; Helm, Grabarek, & Reveal, 2003; Moore, 2013). However, the problem of low minority representation in the dental hygiene profession still persists. This review of the literature will provide an update on the lack of diversity in dental hygiene, the impact this lack of diversity has on the oral health of our society, reasons this dilemma still exists, the steps that are being taken to improve this problem and issues that warrant further study.

Impact on Health Care

Increasing minority representation in all health professions is a priority. In a report by Cohen, Gabriel, and Terrell (2002), the authors proposed that

A diverse health care workforce will help to expand health care access for the underserved, foster research in neglected areas of societal need, and enrich the pool of managers and policymakers to meet the needs of a diverse populace. (p. 91)

The authors contended that the striking increases in U.S. demographic minority trends alone do not establish a case for improving diversity in the health professions. There are four practical reasons, presented by the authors, to build the case for greater diversity in the health care workforce. These include (a) advancing cultural competency, (b) increasing access to high-quality health care services, (c) strengthening the medical research agenda, and (d) ensuring optimal management of the health care system (Cohen et al., p. 91). Although the focus of the report is on medical providers, these reasons to increase diversity apply to other health disciplines, including dentistry and dental hygiene. Each of these practical reasons will be discussed as they relate to dental hygiene.

Cultural competence. Cultural competence refers to the knowledge,

skills, attitudes, and behavior required of a professional to provide optimal, health care services to persons from a wide range of ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds. There are several ways dental and dental hygiene programs include cultural competence training into their curricula. However, cultural competence cannot be learned simply from textbooks and lectures. Interaction with a diverse student body can greatly enhance the educational experience of all students by sharing, learning, and communicating opinions with those of other ethnic, racial, and social origins (Cohen et al., 2002 p. 92). An investigation to explore ways to include “cultural care” into the dental hygiene process of care was conducted by Fitch (2004). Recommendations included incorporating cultural sensitivity into communication, assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, and providing care. In addition, it was concluded that if dental hygienists are to be culturally sensitive in the care they provide, it is imperative dental hygiene programs actively recruit faculty and students from diverse backgrounds (Fitch, 2004). Engeswick (2011) examined the cultural competency of dental hygiene educators in 25 upper midwest dental hygiene programs. One of the purposes of the investigation was to examine dental hygiene educators’ cross-cultural experiences, formal cultural diversity education, usefulness of their education, and, preparation and confidence to meet the Commission on Dental Accreditation Standard 2-19, which states that “graduates must be competent in interpersonal and communications skills to effectively interact with diverse population groups” (Engeswick, p. 23). It was concluded that dental hygiene educators were lacking in adequate, multicultural experiences as evidenced by their limited experiences in cross-cultural settings in their personal lives, formal multicultural

education preparation, personal multicultural experiences during their education, and experiences teaching in multicultural settings (Engeswick, 2011).

Improving access to care. Improving access for the underserved is another argument for increasing diversity in the health workforce. Minority dental providers are more likely to choose to practice in underserved areas (Butters & Winter, 2002). Health Professions Shortage Areas (HPSA) are designated areas that are identified as having shortages of primary care, dental care, or mental health providers. Typically, these HPSA are largely populated by minorities. Youngstown, Ohio, is designated as a HPSA for medical and dental providers. In addition, patients tend to choose physicians of their own race. Using data from a survey of minority health care, the conclusion was that African American and Hispanic Americans sought care from physicians of their own race because of personal preference and language (Saha, Taggart, Komaromy, & Bindman, 2000).

In a 2008 report titled *Multicultural Issues in Oral Health*, Garcia, Cadoret, and Henshaw identified the future social, political, and economic pressures on the dental profession to meet the oral health needs of an increasingly diverse society. Success in meeting these challenges will depend on adequately addressing the multicultural issues that affect doctor-patient communications and patients' oral health beliefs and attitudes. In addition to improving the cultural competence of health professionals, the authors conclude that increasing the diversity of the health care workforce is vitally important to meet the health needs of an increasingly diverse U.S. population (Garcia et al.).

Similarly, a U.S. Senate Subcommittee Report on Primary Health and Aging (U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, 2012), recommended a three-pronged

approach to address the ongoing, unmet, oral health needs of Americans. Options to improve access to dental services for those who have the greatest need include integrating dental services into health centers, promoting prevention and education, and expanding the oral health workforce (U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pension, 2012).

Strengthen research agenda. Broadening and strengthening the U.S. health research agenda is another reason to support creation of a diverse workforce. As mentioned previously, many of the health care issues facing the U.S. disproportionately affect minority populations. Studying minority health issues can only be enhanced by a more diverse representation of students, faculty, researchers and leaders in the profession.

A 2014 ADHA report titled *Advancing Education in Dental Hygiene* included a suggestion on how the dental hygiene profession can better serve the health and wellness needs of our society. The authors stress the need for “transformative change within the dental hygiene profession” to serve the diverse needs of the public and improve oral and overall health (Battrell, Lynch, Steinbach, Bessner, Snyder, & Majeski, 2014). The ADHA Board of Trustees developed a strategic plan which identified assumptions about the future of dental hygiene. The following “assumptions of the future” convey the increasing needs of a diverse U.S. population and the dental hygiene professions’ commitment to this changing healthcare environment (Battrell et al., p. 219). Some of these assumptions include (a) the patient population will increasingly become more diverse with differing values, preferences, expectations for technology use, ways to communicate, and views of work-life balance, (b) new dental hygienists will increasingly become more diverse with differing values, preferences, expectations for technology use,

ways to communicate, and views of work-life balance, (c) dental hygienists will be serving more diverse populations requiring an increase in cultural competencies, and (d) greater diversity among health care professionals improves the pool of executives and public policymakers that will influence all segments of healthcare including public, private, local, state, and national agencies (p. 219). Because the underlying reasons for disparities in oral health are multifactorial, oral health must be integrated with other policies to reduce disparities.

Access to care concerns. Limited access to oral health care services is well documented and has been identified as a significant issue by health professionals. The majority of individuals in these groups who have inadequate access to health care are members of the following minority groups: Black, Asian, American Indian, and Hispanic (National Poverty Center | University of Michigan, n.d.) This lack of access to oral care is coupled with the lack of a diverse dental workforce and creates barriers for adequate oral health care services. Increasing the diversity of the dental workforce can ultimately increase services to those who currently do not have access to oral health services.

Among the many reasons to improve diversity in the oral health workforce, the barrier to access to care is one of the most significant. There is a disproportionately higher incidence of oral health problems among ethnic minority groups and limited access to dental care in the United States (Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General (Executive Summary), n. d.). Since 2000, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recognized the need to improve access to oral health care for all Americans and developed 10 year goals for all Americans known as the Healthy People Program. A prevailing goal of the Healthy People Program, reiterated in the

2020 goals, is to improve access to oral health treatment and services (Oral Health | Healthy People 2020, n.d.).

Investigation into factors that influence the use of dental care among low income and ethnic minorities identifies barriers for access to dental care (Davis & Reisine, 2015). The most frequently stated barriers for access to dental care are lack of dental insurance and cost, fear/anxiety and mistrust, and transportation. Participants associate pain with going to the dentist which leads to fear and anxiety. Fear of pain contributes to feelings of mistrust and a belief that the dentist is not qualified to treat them, especially if the individual has complex medical issues (Davis & Reisine, 2015). African Americans distrust for healthcare providers has a deep-rooted history in U.S. culture. Bias, prejudice, and stereotypes on the part of health care providers may also contribute to feelings of mistrust among minority patient (Kennedy, Mathis, & Woods, 2007) .

Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General concluded that Americans were unaware of the connection between oral health and general health and well-being (Center for Disease Control - Oral health In America - Fact Sheets - Publications - Division of Oral Health, n.d.). Even though improvements have been made toward reducing the extent and severity of oral diseases, a disparity exists among the public. There is a marked disparity in oral health treatment among racial and socioeconomic groups.

The 2004 Sullivan Commission on Diversity in the Healthcare Workforce reported that

African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and American Indians make up more than 25 percent of the U.S. population but only 9 percent of the

nation's nurses, 6 percent of its physicians, and 5 percent of dentists. Similar disparities show up in the faculties of health professional schools. For example, minorities make up less than 10 percent of baccalaureate nursing faculties, 8.6 percent of dental school faculties, and only 4.2 percent of medical school faculties. (p. 2)

The Sullivan report (2004) concluded that underrepresented minorities are still missing from the health professions workforce, and, have not kept up with the increase in diversity in the U.S. population. Also, a link between poor health outcomes for minorities and the shortage of minority providers has been established (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2011). In order to increase diversity, the culture of health professions must adapt to lead to meaningful change.

Even though the factors that contribute to the disparity of dental professionals are numerous and multifaceted, most agree that increasing diversity will improve access to oral health care for minorities. Minority health providers have provided more health care for the underserved in their own racial and ethnic groups than nonminority providers.

Research has demonstrated that dental students who identify as minorities are more likely to practice in underserved areas. A study in 2002 surveyed dental students in two southeastern dental schools and explored differences between African American students and White dental students' motivations for entering the dental profession (Butters & Winter, 2002). The authors reported on differences between the career plans of African American and White dental students (Butters & Winter, 2002). Students ranked their motivation for entering the profession on factors including income, job

security, prestige, service, family commitments, independence, and flexibility. African American students were more motivated to enter the profession to serve the public than their White counterparts. African American students report they are more likely to practice in the public sector and urban areas, as opposed to White dental students after graduation (Butters & Winter, 2002). This study also looked at the education of parents and their income. While parental education was comparable between groups, with approximately 75% of respondents in both groups reporting that both parents had at least some college, parental income was different between the groups. More than 37% of African American students reported that parental income was less than \$50,000, compared to 23% of White students. The results of this study can be used to support the topic of increasing diversity in the dental hygiene profession because it recognizes that there are differences between minority and non-minority dental students' motivations for entering a health profession.

Evidence for Lack of Diversity

In the U.S., there are an adequate number of dental professionals to meet the oral health needs of its citizens. Each year, the ADEA gathers data on incoming students in U.S. dental and allied dental school programs. The compiled data are shared with the dental education community. In addition to the number of applicants, there is a comprehensive analysis and review of gender, race/ethnicity, and geographic distribution of enrollees. According to the ADEA, in 2000, there were 5,438 dental hygiene graduates, and, that number increased to 7,277 dental hygiene graduates in 2013(American, Dental Education Association, n.d.). However, segments of our population still do not have equal access to oral health care services. These geographic

areas are known as Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA). These HPSAs are geographic areas where the population has an inadequate number of dentists to serve its dental needs. The designation is used primarily for the purposes of educational loan repayment for dentists and dental hygienists. Dental professionals who choose to practice in these federally designated shortage areas may qualify for loan repayment when they commit to a predetermined length of stay. Those individuals not receiving adequate dental care in these HPSAs primarily include children and those in poor and low income households.

The lack of diversity in the dental hygiene profession has been well documented. In 2000, (Dhir et al., 2002) reported on a national survey, completed in 1998, on the amount of diversity among dental hygiene students and faculty. The ratio of students in dental hygiene programs was found to be disproportionately low compared to the number of minorities in the U.S. (Dhir et al.). A 2009 study revealed 78.6% of students and 90% of faculty were non-Hispanic White (Barrow, 2010). Results of a 2009 study also reported on African American representation in the profession (Onik, 2009). Results of Onik's (2009) study reported that of the 10 U.S. states with the lowest number of dental hygienists, three have the highest number of African Americans living in those states (Mississippi, Louisiana, District of Columbia) (Onik, 2009). There is ample evidence to demonstrate that a nationwide disparity exists. In addition, the results of Onik's investigation concluded that the professional practice regulations for dental hygienists are more limited in states with more African Americans. Strategies to improve the amount of diversity in the profession are needed, including the introduction of new legislation to improve the restrictive practice laws in some states.

Impact on the Profession

When a lack of diversity in the dental profession exists, it translates into a lack of minority representation of dental educators as well. In 2002, it was reported that 10.5% of dental and dental hygiene students, and 6.7% of dental hygiene faculty were members of racial and ethnic minorities (Dhir et al., 2002). The lack of diversity among dental school educators presents an obstacle for the mentoring of new faculty with diverse backgrounds. Dental schools have made an effort to increase the diversity of dental faculty by exposing URM dental residents to the skills necessary for academic careers before they graduate. At the Bronx-Lebanon Department of Dentistry, a year-long program known as the Dental Faculty Development Program (DFDP) was implemented, and offered a variety of teaching experiences, learning activities, and teaching simulations to young URM dentists (Gates et al., 2013). The 15 participants included dental faculty and residents who attended 24 focused learning experiences over the course of a year. The learning experiences included seminars, webinars, team projects, and mini-lectures all designed to expose program participants to instruction design, teaching styles, and leadership skills. While this program only reflects the results of a single dental residency training site, the outcomes of the program reported that residents reported enhanced confidence in the skills they learned, but showed minimal change in their attitudes about educational issues (Gates et al.). Gates et al. recommended that dental education programs need to be more pro-active in “growing our own” (p. 288) dental educators within the context of dental education.

Dental hygiene programs that lack diversity can impact the cultural competency of the profession. Warren, Henson, Turner, and O’Neill (2004) assessed the cultural

environment in a Texas dental hygiene program. A student questionnaire was used to gather beliefs and opinions on diversity, gender, ethnicity/race, age, and sexual orientation. Students reported they were not prepared to deal with patients whose primary language is other than English. This research supports the inclusion of diversity training into the dental hygiene curriculum (Warren et al., 2004).

A 2010 study on the causes and solutions for dental hygiene faculty shortages in the U.S. suggested that a lack of diversity among faculty was one of the leading causes for lack of diversity among dental hygienists (Carr et al., 2010). Likewise, a 2007 study reported that 94% of full-time faculty members were Caucasian, and, 96% were female (Collins, Zinskie, Keskula, & Thompson, 2007). Greater recruitment of applicants for faculty positions may help to improve the lack of minorities in the profession.

Efforts to Increase Diversity

A report released in 2011 from the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council titled *Improving Access to Oral Health Care for Vulnerable and Underserved Populations* was charged with “assessing the current oral health care delivery system; exploring its strengths, limitations, and future challenges; and describing a vision for the delivery of oral healthcare to vulnerable and underserved populations” (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2011, p. ix). The report reaffirmed the significant disparities that exist in access to oral health care in the U.S. The report identified 10 recommendations to improve access to oral health care for vulnerable and underserved populations. The committee supports changes to dental education and training programs to improve the delivery of quality oral health care to diverse populations by increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of the workforce (Institute of

Medicine and National Research Council, 2011, p. 236). An integrated approach through education, financing, and regulation of oral health services is needed to create an oral health care delivery system that provides oral health care to vulnerable and underserved populations (p. 252).

There have been a number of significant strategies and approaches to improve the effectiveness of recruitment efforts designed to improve diversity in dental schools and nursing, but, no well-developed models for dental hygiene education programs. Some dental schools are using creative, alternative approaches to address the recruitment dilemma. Researchers, such as Helm et al. (2003), looked at the impact of using criteria other than grades in the acceptance process. These alternative criteria included questions about the applicant's experience with racism or social bias, cultural activities they have participated in, and their professional goals (Helm et al.). A study by Lopez, Wadenya, and Berthold in 2000 collected data on reasons that URM dental students have for selecting a school and proposed retention strategies. Minority students reported that the biggest factor in retention was the presence of other URM students in the program (Lopez et al.). Several dental schools have proactively developed strategies to attract and retain minority students. The University Of Louisville School of Dentistry collected data from 1993 to 2010 to determine why minority enrollment had improved after new initiatives were implemented (McCants, 2011). Results suggested three tactics, partnerships/collaborations, mentoring, and restructuring administration all made an impact on increasing minority enrollment (McCants, 2011).

Some dental schools have included parents in their recruitment strategies to increase the number of URM students. The University of Pennsylvania School of Dental

Medicine implemented an outreach program known as Short Term Enrichment Program (STEP). This two-day course for parents and children included presentations, laboratory experiences, and virtual classrooms. Results, after five years of the STEP program, concluded that students who enrolled in pre-dental programs or dental school had a higher percentage of parents who participated in the STEP program (Wadenya & Lopez, 2008).

Several dental schools offer summer enrichment and recruitment programs to increase enrollment of URM students. The programs that have been in existence for 10 or more years were shown to be most effective in recruiting students (Gravely, McCann, Brooks, Harman, & Schneiderman, 2004). Characteristics of these programs that made them successful include a supportive mentor and advisor relationship with participants, proactive admission policies, and substantial, financial institutional support.

The Pipeline, Profession, and Practice: Community-Based Dental Education Program (Formicola, D'Abreau, & Tedesco, 2010) was developed to increase enrollment of URM students in U.S. dental schools. The concept is to build a pipeline that will bring diverse people to the dental workforce. In 2000, the program was created to work with dental education to address the underrepresentation of minority students in dental schools. A 2010 report on the success of the Pipeline Program, after eight years, showed the program was successful in increasing minority enrollment in dental schools, but additional financial resources would be needed to sustain the recruitment efforts. Focus group participants in the study reported on some of the barriers they had to overcome to enroll in dental school. The first barrier was financial debt the students would incur in dental school, second was the lack of support from families, friends, peers, and teachers,

and, lastly, lack of promotion of dentistry in undergraduate institutions (Formicola et al., 2010). While pipeline programs have been used to successfully recruit dental students, there is a lack of research on pipeline programs aimed at recruiting and retaining minority dental hygiene students and faculty. There is a lack of data that measures the effectiveness of recruitment interventions that improve the diversity of students applying to dental hygiene education programs.

There are challenges to being a minority dental student, and studies that address the students' perspective are crucial to recruitment and retention strategies. A study using focus groups and interviews explored reasons why dentistry attracts so few URM students (Veal, Perry, Stavisky, Ed, & Herbert, 2004). Ninety-two students from six universities participated in the study to summarize their perspectives on being a minority dental student. The authors concluded that (a) early and frequent exposure to the profession of dentistry and dentists is essential for minority students to consider dentistry as a career choice, and (b) most URM students found out about dental programs by a family member or friend, not a specific recruitment effort (p. 938). Veal et al. also reported that African American students felt that faculty was not supportive and that the atmosphere in dental school was uncomfortable. The students reported incidents of subtle discrimination and miscommunication when interacting with faculty (p. 942). It is imperative that schools are prepared to develop a strategy that improves diversity enrollment while promoting an environment that welcomes the URM student. Dental and dental hygiene schools will more likely increase minority enrollment by using data from studies, like the above mentioned, on diversity recruitment, as opposed to recruitment strategies that are designed to generically improve overall enrollment.

Dental schools located in areas with low diversity should recruit beyond their geographic boundaries to increase the recruitment pool of diverse applicants (Andersen et al., 2007). Dental schools in U.S. counties with higher amounts of URM populations have higher amounts of diverse applicants (Andersen et al.). There are financial incentives to encourage more minorities to join the profession and encourage service in underserved areas by offering loan repayment for dental professionals willing to locate and work in those underserved areas (Andersen et al., 2010). Gravely et al. (2004) concluded that recruitment and enrichment programs are a viable option to increase minority dental school enrollment.

Special interest groups such as The American Dental Education Association (ADEA) have developed specific strategies to address the lack of diversity in the dental profession. For example, the ADEA has collaborated with the ADA to form a committee charged with developing and implementing a national minority student recruitment and retention program. The ADEA has also offered biannual conferences for dental educators to develop a national focus and forum for minority student issues (Sinkford, Valachovic, & Harrison, 2004). Information on dental programs can be useful for identifying factors that increase minority enrollment. One of the most important factors predicting a higher percent of URM students in dental school is a higher proportion of URM clinical faculty (Andersen et al., 2007) These and other programs and initiatives are essential to address the issue of minority underrepresentation in the dental profession.

Dental educational initiatives have attempted to improve the representation of minorities in the dental profession. In 2004, the ADEA established the Minority Dental Faculty Development Program (MDFD). The objective of the program is to develop

academic partnerships, mentoring, and institutional commitment and leadership designed to enhance the number of minorities interested in dental careers (Sinkford et al., 2004). These and other programs and initiatives are essential to address the issue of minority underrepresentation in the dental profession.

Diversity in the Nursing Profession

The nursing profession is equally challenged with developing strategies to improve diversity. Nursing researchers have found that recruitment strategies must target diverse student populations in the middle and high school environment, provide support during the application process, and offer mentoring for current nursing students (Beacham, Askew, & Williams, 2009). Others suggest the importance of determining the knowledge and misconceptions among middle school and high school guidance counselors, and conduct one-day workshops which focus on increasing the counselors' degree of knowledge concerning the profession (Campbell-Heider, Sackett, & Whistler, 2008).

Building on the results from other nursing recruitment and retention research, researchers evaluated the impact of a program that one baccalaureate school of nursing implemented to promote academic success for disadvantaged and ethnically diverse nursing students considered at higher risk for attrition than traditional nursing students known as the Success in Learning: Individualized Pathways Program ([SLIPP] Condon et al., 2013). Condon et al. (2013) studied the implementation and outcome of this academic success and retention model for disadvantaged and ethnically diverse nursing students.

The multi-faceted model included five components: pre-entrance preparation, academic support, social support, financial support, and faculty development workshops. Goals of the SLIPP Program were to increase the number of disadvantaged and ethnically diverse applicants to a baccalaureate nursing program, increase their completion rate, and increase pass rate on nursing board scores. Students were recruited for the program based on a variety of criteria. They included unsuccessful application to the nursing program, single parent, first-generation college students, English as a second language, member of an URM group, low family income, and other select criteria. Seventy (90.9%) of the 77 students graduated from a nursing program and entered the nursing workforce (Condon et al., 2013). Ethnic diversity within the school of nursing increased because of Hispanic and Black/African American students who completed the SLIPP. Condon et al. (2013) concluded that nursing faculty and administrators who want to increase diversity in the nursing workforce should consider multiple strategies to accomplish this goal. The conclusions from this article support the need to develop faculty development programs that include recruitment, retention, and advisement of disadvantaged and ethnically diverse students. This manuscript supports research findings in dentistry and dental hygiene that the increase of ethnic and minority providers relies on intentional, deliberate choices in finding ways to increase the representation of URMs in the health professions.

Policy Initiatives to Increase Diversity

The dental profession has been much more committed to increasing the diversity of its applicants to dental school than the dental hygiene profession. In response to the challenge to increase diversity, the Commission on Dental Accreditation revised its standards for dental schools to place a greater emphasis on diversity in the field. The

Standard states that dental schools “*must* have policies and practices to (a) achieve appropriate levels of diversity among its students, faculty, and staff, (b) engage in ongoing systematic and focused efforts to attract and retain students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds, and (c) systematically evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity”(ADA, n.d.)

The intent of this standard is that

The dental school should develop strategies to address the dimensions of diversity including structure, curriculum, and institutional climate. The dental school should articulate its expectations regarding diversity across its academic community in the context of local and national responsibilities, and regularly assess how well such expectations are being achieved. Schools could incorporate elements of diversity into their planning that include, but are not limited to, gender, racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic. Schools should establish focused, significant, and sustained programs to recruit and retain suitably diverse students, faculty, and staff. (ADA, n.d., p.21)

The Commission on Dental Accreditation for dental hygiene education programs does not have a standard that requires strategies in any of these areas to increase diversity. Dental hygiene programs may have initiatives in place to increase diversity in their schools, but there is no mandate for them to do so. The accreditation standard that comes closest to the dental school standard is Standard 2-19 of the Dental Hygiene Program Accreditation Standards which states that “graduates must be competent in

interpersonal and communication skills to effectively interact with diverse population groups” (ADA, n.d., p. 23). Clearly, this accreditation standard for dental hygiene education programs does not mandate schools to have policies in place to improve diversity of their student population. Stronger accreditation standards, like the ones seen in dental education programs, would encourage more diversity and increase students experience working in underserved areas. This is one area that a policy change could help by making dental hygiene programs more pro-active and strategic in their efforts to recruit minority students.

Special interest groups, such as the ADEA, have developed specific strategies to address the lack of diversity in the dental profession. For example, the ADEA has collaborated with the ADA to form a committee charged with developing and implementing a national minority student recruitment and retention program. The ADEA hosts biannual conferences for dental educators to develop a national focus and forum for minority student issues (Sinkford et al., 2004).

Organizations such as the National Dental Association (NDA) and the National Dental Hygienists’ Association (NDHA) represent African American dental professionals. The NDHA was founded in 1932 by African American dental hygienists to address the issues faced by minority hygienists in the profession. After three years, the organization dissolved and was reactivated in 1962. Members meet annually with the NDA with the aim of providing a professional foundation for students by serving as mentors during their transition from students to licensed professionals. Despite this, Moore (2013) reported that these groups have not played a significant role in improving the diversity of dental hygienists.

Cohen, Gabriel, and Terrell (2002) built the case for using affirmative action to increase diversity among health care workers and improve health care access and cultural competence. They argue that interventions to improve the racial and ethnic diversity of the U.S. health care workforce should begin long before application to medical or dental school. However, they also feel that until significant reform and change occur to improve diversity, affirmative action policies are needed to achieve a diverse workforce in healthcare.

Race-based Affirmative Action, and the use of alternative admission policies, have historically been used to address the issue that a large number of minority groups were underrepresented in universities. Affirmative Action, in higher education, was used to create more opportunities for groups historically excluded. Some of these efforts have been hotly contested in the courts for decades and continue to be debated. Over the last four decades there have been several U.S. Supreme Court cases that challenged affirmative action policies in public universities.

Admission policies that use race and ethnicity as factors in the application process to improve the diversity of their student body have been successful in increasing diversity in some instances. Universities that can show that using race as a factor in their admission policies are broad in scope and not narrowly defined have been upheld in the courts. While some may consider these policies a form of reverse discrimination, there is legal support for these policies as long as there is a compelling state interest justifying the need for such a policy. The use of affirmative action policies may help, but they have not eliminated the need to develop other strategies to increase diversity.

Why Lack of Diversity Persists

Several studies have attempted to address the reasons for lack of diversity and what influences students to choose a career in dental hygiene. Sandino and Rowe (2014) surveyed 84 dental hygiene students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in California. Almost all the subjects reported that there was a person who influenced them to apply to dental hygiene school. The students' dentist, family member, and dental hygienist had the greatest influence on their choosing dental hygiene as a care. While these results are consistent with other studies on reasons for lack of diversity in dental hygiene, little progress has been made to remedy the lack of diversity. The authors recommended several recruitment efforts to target URM populations. Results of the study showed that counselors were not very influential in a URM student's career choice. The authors recommend that dental hygiene professionals improve the knowledge of these counselors about dental hygiene as a career. The authors also recommend increasing interest in the profession through outreach programs for adolescents and youths. Additionally, URM dental professionals need to assume responsibility as models and mentors. This idea of using URM dental professionals as models and mentors is a common theme in dental hygiene research on recruitment and may prove to be an effective way to recruit minorities. Further study is needed to determine the practicality of such a program.

Engaging URM high school students in a program about dentistry and dental hygiene increased their interest in attending college and preparing to enter health-related professions (Inglehart et al., 2014). Inglehart et al. also reported on the benefits of involving dental and dental hygiene students in mentoring and educational activities. The

program, although successful, was unable to continue due to lack of funding. While this program showed promise, it was based on a small sample and only reported on increased interest, but did not follow the students for actual enrollment. Despite these limitations, the results of this study can be used to further investigate and evaluate best practices in recruitment of URM dental hygiene students.

Morgan (2015) conducted a study to look at the attitudes and beliefs of minority college students in reference to the dental hygiene profession. A questionnaire was administered to a small sample of students to gauge minority students' knowledge of dental hygiene as a career. The author reported no differences were found based on gender, age, education, and ethnicity. Even though the study was small and would be considered a pilot study, the methodology and research focus would be worth further consideration on a larger scale.

Moore (2013) authored one of the most comprehensive studies in recent literature on the dental hygiene diversity dilemma. This study used a mixed-method approach that included a national survey, and, focus groups to identify reasons for lack of diversity. In addition, Moore reported a correlation between minority dental hygiene administrators and the number of minority dental hygiene students enrolled in the program. Moore also reported that career days, job fairs, and career counseling were the most effective diversity initiatives reported. Moore offered several explanations for continued lack of diversity including two major themes that emerged in the dissertation discussion section. The author noted that the professional organizations have not been heavily involved in diversity initiatives, such as tutoring, mentoring, faculty advising, leadership training, and scholarships. Likewise, when dental hygiene program directors were asked to comment

on what they perceived were the reasons for disproportionately low numbers of minority dental hygiene students and faculty in dental hygiene programs, they reported that it was the national organization's responsibility to address this dilemma. There were some limitations including the sample size, low response rate, and limited generalizability. However, the significance of this study and the conclusions are relevant for the current investigation because it was comprehensive and offered several recommendations for further research.

Summary

Much research has been conducted on dental school minority student recruitment and retention strategies, but there is little in the literature on recruitment and retention strategies for minority dental hygiene students. Dental hygiene school directors report on using retention strategies to improve minority enrollment, but no studies were found that studied the use of recruitment and retention strategies in combination.

Recognizing that a lack of diversity exists, acknowledging its impact on oral health care, and developing strategies to improve the recruitment of minorities has made an impact on improving the diversity in the dental hygiene profession, but not eliminated the need to study further. Conducting a regional assessment of minority dental hygienists and personally interviewing URM students may offer a new perspective and direction for practical, strategic, recruitment activities to address the diversity dilemma. URM dental hygienists may offer the best perspective on what initiatives (improved marketing, targeted outreach campaigns, and strategic planning) may be most effective to recruit URM students into the profession.

After reviewing the literature, it is identified that there is a lack of innovative, strategic efforts to promote the dental hygiene profession in federally designated health profession shortage areas. Research evidence on the experiences of URM, practicing dental hygienists in Ohio and Pennsylvania was non-existent in the literature. In the studies that have been completed on this topic, most authors have recommended further study to confirm the results. This study will use qualitative methods to explore the experience of dental hygienists practicing in the field. Interviews will be used to obtain transcripts of dental hygienists' understandings, attitudes, and perceptions of their experience in a workforce, with very little diversity and recruitment efforts to improve this dilemma. Results of this research will be used to develop strategic, evidence-based best practices to recruit a more diverse applicant pool of dental hygiene students.

Chapter 3

Methodology

There is a lack of ethnic and racial diversity in the dental hygiene profession across the United States (Dhir et al., 2002). This phenomenon is also prevalent in the Youngstown, Ohio, area, the location of the YSU dental hygiene program. Since Youngstown, Ohio, is geographically located on the border of Ohio and Pennsylvania, participants in this study were recruited from the states of Ohio and Pennsylvania. Recruitment efforts have been ineffective in increasing the number of underrepresented minorities (URM) into the dental hygiene profession. This research explores the motivations of URM individuals to enter the profession of dental hygiene and the recruitment efforts that can improve the number of underrepresented minority students into the profession. There is a lack of empirical evidence in the literature that examines the experiences and opinions of URM in the dental hygiene profession using quantitative and qualitative methodology.

Research Design

Mixed method research is often used to explore a phenomenon and address a question at different levels by using multiple ways to explore a research problem (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). There are a number of mixed method design strategies utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data. Survey research is an effective, convenient method of collecting data. There are two types of surveys; questionnaires and interviews (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Electronic, or E-surveys, are questionnaires that are distributed via the Web or e-mail and are becoming a more popular way to distribute questionnaires to a large population. Interviews are a more

personal method of collecting data. Interviews can be conducted in person, on the telephone, or in focus groups.

There were two phases of data collection in this investigation. First, quantitative data was collected and analyzed using two different electronic questionnaires. A link to an electronic questionnaire was sent to registered dental hygienists in Ohio and Pennsylvania and another to Ohio and Pennsylvania dental hygiene program directors. Results from the questionnaires were analyzed, evaluated and carefully considered in the design of the questions for the personal interviews. Phase two of the data collection involved personal in-depth interviews with registered dental hygienists who identify as an underrepresented minority.

Participants

Three groups of individuals were included in this study: Ohio and Pennsylvania dental hygiene program directors, American Dental Hygiene Association (ADHA) member dental hygienists practicing in Ohio and Pennsylvania, and dental hygienists who identify as an underrepresented minority (African American/Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, International, Other) who either attended a dental hygiene program in Ohio or are licensed in Ohio.

Directors of dental hygiene programs. The directors of the 24 dental hygiene programs of Ohio and Pennsylvania were selected to take part in this study. The names and contact information for the program directors including their work address, phone number, and e-mail address were obtained from the state component websites for the Ohio and Pennsylvania Dental Hygienists' Association. The dental hygiene programs selected for this study can be found in Appendix B.

Registered dental hygienists in Ohio and Pennsylvania. Members of the Ohio and Pennsylvania ADHA were invited to participate in this study. The ADHA represents dental hygienists in the United States. All dental hygienists are eligible to be members, but only about 10% are actually members. The ADHA's research department provided e-mail access to the Ohio and Pennsylvania members by originating an e-mail from the ADHA inviting those members to participate. The ADHA has a data-sharing, agreement program that allows students to purchase e-mail addresses for questionnaire distribution for research purposes. The data sharing agreement is entered into after the researcher agrees to comply with the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Interview participants. Interview participants were selected in several ways.

Ohio and Pennsylvania registered dental hygienists who identified as an ethnicity other than Caucasian/White on the dental hygiene survey had the option of including their name, address, e-mail and other contact information on the last question of the survey sent to dental hygienists. Voluntarily including their name meant that they would agree to be contacted to participate in an interview. Since a limited number of participants signed up for an interview after completing the survey, other methods were needed to identify participants. The researcher first identified YSU dental hygiene alumni who fit the inclusion criteria of practicing in Ohio or Pennsylvania and identified as an URM.

Snowball sampling was then used to identify additional participants for personal interviews. Snowball sampling may be used to increase the number of participants who meet a certain criterion. Once people are identified who meet the criteria for the study, those participants are asked to recommend others who meet the criteria. In this study, the selection of participants for interviews was limited to dental hygienists working in Ohio

or Pennsylvania who self-identify as an ethnicity other than Caucasian/White. This sampling method was used because of the difficulty finding participants who met the criteria and volunteered to participate in the study.

In addition to snowball sampling, other methods were used to find qualified participants. The National Dental Hygiene Association (NDHA), an association representing minority dental hygienists, was contacted via e-mail requesting contact information for Ohio and Pennsylvania NDHA members. A representative from the NDHA was not able to release contact information for members, but offered to upload a link to the survey in a NDHA electronic newsletter informing members of the research study and inviting them to complete the survey. In addition, phone calls, e-mails, letters, networking and word of mouth increased the number of participants. Seventeen hygienists agreed to participate in an in-depth interview.

Instruments

Dental hygiene director survey. Survey Monkey, an online survey development tool was used to design the questionnaire and collect the data because of its user-friendliness and data analysis features. The program director's questionnaire was designed with a variety of question formats. Questions from a recent questionnaire published in a study on recruitment of dental hygiene students from minority groups (Hunter, Kinney, Inglehart, & Habil, 2015) was used as a reference to develop the questionnaire questions. Permission was granted to use the questionnaire as a reference. Multiple-choice questions, Likert scale, closed and open-ended questions were used to develop the 29-item questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed to find out information such as: (a) the type of educational setting, (b) the number of minority students in the program (c) recruitment activities, (d) the type of student program directors recruit, (e) recruitment challenges, and (f) recruitment best practices. Several questions related to who has the responsibility for recruitment and the time spent recruiting were asked. Using a Likert scale, directors were given a list of factors and asked to rate the priority each factor was given when selecting students for admission into their programs. Lastly, questions about recruitment techniques were posed including questions about brochure distribution, participation in recruitment events, funding for recruitment, recruitment challenges, and best practices of recruitment. The questionnaire may be found in Appendix F. The questionnaire was pilot-tested prior to distribution on a sample of former and current dental hygiene program directors. Minor alterations were made to the questionnaire to improve clarity of two questions and rearrangement of questions to ensure a logical flow.

The questionnaire was distributed electronically from the Survey Monkey website to the program directors by the principal investigator. Two reminder e-mails were sent. One was sent after two weeks, followed by another week to improve the response rate. The reminder e-mails were only sent to those who had not completed the questionnaire.

Registered dental hygienists' questionnaire. Survey Monkey was also used to design and distribute the questionnaire intended for registered dental hygienists. A questionnaire used in a 2013 dissertation on minorities in the dental hygiene profession was revised and mailed to American Dental Hygienist Association members in Ohio and Pennsylvania. Permission to use the questionnaire as a reference was granted by the author of the dissertation (Moore, 2013). Demographic and background questions such as

gender, ethnicity, type of employment, state of residence, years licensed as a hygienist were asked in multiple choice format. A Likert-type numerical scale was used to measure participant's interest in mentoring high school students, mentoring dental hygiene students, facilitating career days and tutoring dental hygiene students. Additional questions focused on why participants entered the field of dental hygiene and their experience in the profession. Using the responses from the questionnaire, the researcher compared responses of minority to non-minority respondents to identify similarities and differences for entering the profession. Using several open-ended questions participants were asked about recruitment efforts to improve the number of minority dental hygienists.

Based on the self-reported ethnicity question, those respondents who identified other than Caucasian/White were invited to participate in a personal interview. Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was pilot-tested to several dental hygienists. Changes were made to question settings in Survey Monkey to allow multiple responses where appropriate, adjust display options to improve the questionnaire design and re-word two questions for clarity.

The e-mail invitation included an introduction to explain the purpose of the project and a deadline for completion. Participants were given ten days to respond. On the eighth day, an e-mail was sent reminding participants to complete the questionnaire. The principal researcher distributed the survey via Survey Monkey. The survey can be found in Appendix F.

Personal Interview Questions. Personal interviews were used to further explore

the dilemma regarding the low representation of minorities in the dental hygiene profession. The interview was structured to provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on the reasons why they chose the dental hygiene profession, communicate their experiences in the dental hygiene profession, and share their views on ways to improve the recruitment and retention of minority dental hygiene students. Interview questions were developed by first assessing participant responses to the program director's and dental hygiene electronic questionnaires. In addition, questions used in Moore's (2013) dissertation on minorities in the dental hygiene profession were used to refine the interview questions. Permission to use the questions was granted by the author of the dissertation (Moore, 2013). Relevant, follow-up questions were used in addition to pre-determined questions. A pilot interview was conducted with one or two subjects to test the interview questions.

Subjects to be interviewed were selected from the questionnaire respondents who identified as members of an URM group. Members of the sample were selected based on active or previous employment in the dental hygiene profession. Subjects were initially chosen from the Tri-County area (Mahoning, Trumbull, and Columbiana). A sample of 10 to 15 dental hygienist was the target number of subjects. There is no set number of subjects in a qualitative study. The researcher determines when there is saturation in the response, and little is gained from further interviews (Weiss, 1994, p. 21). It was important that subjects represented graduates of a mid-western-based dental hygiene program since this study is focused on improving the recruitment techniques and experiences of graduates in the YSU dental hygiene program.

Data Collection: Phase One

After receiving approval from the Youngstown State University Human Subjects Review Committee on December 15, 2015, the questionnaires were distributed electronically. The program director's questionnaire was distributed to all 24 dental hygiene program directors in Ohio and Pennsylvania. The program director e-mail addresses were uploaded to Survey Monkey and distributed on December 18, 2015. After the initial distribution to 24 program directors, two e-mails bounced back, two program director's opted out of e-mails from Survey Monkey, and one participant requested the questionnaire be forwarded to another director. Subsequent to the initial mailing, two reminder e-mails were sent.

The ADHA's research department provided e-mail access to the Ohio and Pennsylvania members by originating an e-mail from the ADHA inviting those members to participate. The e-mail invitation included an introduction to explain the purpose of the project, a link to the questionnaire on Survey Monkey, and a deadline for completion. Participants were given 10 days to respond. On the eighth day, a reminder e-mail was sent reminding participants to complete the survey.

Data Collection: Phase Two

Prospective participants were invited to participate in the interview if they self-identified as an URM. The interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed-upon time and location convenient to the researcher and subjects either in person, via Skype or Face Time. A thirty-minute block of time was requested for each interview. Informed consent and ethical release forms were obtained before each interview and audio recorded with

permission from the participant. At the completion of the interviews, the recorded transcripts were transcribed by a third party. Interview transcripts are included in Appendix L, with all potentially identifying information redacted.

Data Analysis

The in-depth interviews were transcribed from audio digital recordings using a professional transcriptionist. The transcribed interviews were scrutinized for accuracy using the original audio recordings. For the analysis of the interviews, themes from the transcribed voice recordings were generated and analyzed,

A data reduction procedure must be used to convert transcripts from a phenomenological study before it can be summarized into themes that emerge from interview data (Rudestam & Newton, 2014). The authors outline seven steps to convert transcripts from a qualitative study into data (p.183). All seven steps should be completed for each participant. Once data were individually compiled, they were combined with results of all participants to summarize the experience of the entire group.

The seven steps included:

1. Review each statement for how well it describes the experience.
2. Record all relevant statements.
3. Remove all statements that are redundant, or overlap with others, leaving the key meaning units of the experience.
4. Organize the invariant meaning units into themes.
5. Coalesce the themes into a description of the textures of the experience and augment the description with quotations from the text.

6. Using your imagination and taking multiple perspectives to find possible meanings in the text, construct a description of the structures of your experience (Rudestam & Newton, 2014).
7. Create a textual-structural description of the meanings and essences of your experience. (p. 183)

Ethics

Respect, confidentiality, and privacy must be considered when conducting research. The YSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) ensures that measures are in place to protect the rights of participants. Informed consent was included in the first page of each questionnaire and was obtained before each interview. (See Appendix M for IRB approval letter)

Summary

Questionnaires were used to collect data from dental hygienists and program directors on the topic of URM in the dental hygiene profession. After thorough review and analysis of the questionnaire data, semi-structured interview questions were designed to gather rich and detailed information on the lived experiences of URM dental hygienists. The interviews explored URM dental hygienists' motivations for choosing a career in dental hygiene, their experiences as practicing clinicians, and opinions on recruitment efforts to increase the number of URM dental professionals. Interviews were used because they provided greater detail and depth than the questionnaires. Open-ended questions were used to solicit perspectives and opinions on individual experiences and explore the implications of these experiences on their lives. The qualitative interview design also strived to encourage discussion on recruitment techniques to improve racial

and ethnic diversity in dental hygiene. The personal interviews were facilitated by the principal researcher.

Personal Interview Protocol

I. Introduction

- Interviewer will welcome participant and express appreciation for participation
- Interviewer will introduce herself

II. Purpose

- The purpose of the interview will be stated, confidentiality statement reviewed, consent form signed if interviewing in person, verbal consent if interviewed via Skype or Face time, and the presence of recording equipment will be highlighted.
- Explain the session will be taped in order to obtain the fullest information from the comments made.
- The tapes will be transcribed as information via assigned numerical identifier of each participant completing the interview.

III. Framework

- Interviewer will ask an opening question as an icebreaker
- Interviewer will ask one question and instruct participants to respond clearly
- Interviewer will keep the interview flowing, remain neutral or impartial, use phrases or probes to expand the expressed idea, use questions to extract richer detail.

III. Conclusion

- The interviewer will express gratitude to participants, review the notes of the discussion, assure that their ideas will be transcribed as accurately as possible, and communicate that the results will be made available.

Personal Interview Note Taking Form

This form will be used to record the proceedings of the personal interviews. Notes should be extensive and accurately reflect the content of the interview as well as any salient observations of nonverbal behavior, such as facial expressions, hand movements, etc. Interviews will also be tape recorded and transcribed.

Name of Individual being interviewed: _____

Date of Interview: _____ Start Time: _____

Location of Interview: _____ End Time: _____

Name of
Interviewer: _____

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this investigation was to explore the differences in motivation of racially and ethnically diverse dental hygienists compared to non-minority dental hygienists, and identify ways to improve the recruitment of students into the profession. There are few studies in the literature that look at the experiences of underrepresented minority (URM) dental hygienists and their opinions on best practices for improving the number of URMs into the profession. This mixed-method investigation used two electronic surveys and personal interviews to collect data. The surveys were used to gather background information and provide insight into the development of interview questions that would further explore the personal perspectives and experiences of URM dental hygienists. The results of this study can be used by program directors, university admissions, and recruitment personnel to implement effective strategies to increase the number of minority applicants in dental hygiene programs.

The results of the two separate electronic survey's questions and in-depth interviews will be summarized and described in relationship to the research questions. The results of the electronic surveys will be presented first, followed by theme analysis of the personal interviews. Each research question will be addressed with responses from the associated survey items and interview responses. The survey's question-by-question analysis for the dental hygiene survey can be found in the Appendix I.

Research Questions

1. What are the similarities between practicing URM dental hygienists and non-URM dental hygienists as to what motivated them to choose dental hygiene as a field of study?
2. What are the differences between practicing URM dental hygienists and non-URM dental hygienists as to what motivated them to choose dental hygiene as a field of study?
3. What factors, such as the influence of a mentor, role model, or participation in recruitment events, most likely impact choosing dental hygiene as a career?
4. What are the opinions and experiences of URM dental hygienists on ways to improve the recruitment and retention of URM dental hygiene students?

Participation Rates

An electronic 29 question survey was sent to 24 program directors of dental hygiene programs in Ohio and Pennsylvania. The e-mail addresses were obtained from the Ohio and Pennsylvania Dental Hygiene Association web pages. The survey was sent out on December 18, 2015, and was available for 30 days. Two reminders were sent. A total of nine directors responded to the survey for an overall response rate of 37.5%.

A second electronic survey was sent to 1,289 ADHA dental hygienists in Ohio and Pennsylvania. The e-mail addresses were obtained from the ADHA research department. The 27 item questionnaire was e-mailed via the ADHA central office on January 5, 2016, with one reminder. After an initial e-mail invitation, followed by a reminder 10 days later, the response rate was 22% ($n = 288$). A summary of the participation rates is presented in Table 1. The informed consent letters and complete surveys can be found in Appendices B, C, D, and E.

Table 1. *Survey Participants by Total Number of Respondents, Frequency and Percentage*

Participants	<i>Surveyed</i>	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>
Directors	24	9	37.5%
Dental Hygienists	1,289	288	22.34%

Profile of the Sample

The majority of participants who responded to the dental hygiene survey (98.60%, n =281), were female and only (1.4% n=4), were male, while three chose not to answer.

The number of male respondents compared to females is slightly less than national reporting statistics and can be viewed in Table 2.

Table 2. *Gender*

Gender	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Female	281	98.60%
Male	4	1.43%

Ethnicity reported by the respondents is summarized in Table 3. The majority of respondents reported to be White/Caucasian and represent 95.42% (n=271) of the sample. Of the remaining respondents, 2.46% (n=7) were Hispanic/Latino, 1.06% (n=3) were African American/Black, 0.35% (1) were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.70% (n=2) self-identified as “other” for ethnicity. The two respondents who selected “other” for a response specified they were biracial (black/white) and Caucasian/Spanish. Four chose not to answer. This distribution of ethnicity is slightly different than national statistics for dental hygiene graduates in 2014. The ADA Health Policy Institute, Survey of Dental Hygiene Education programs reported on the ethnicity of dental hygiene graduates in 2014. The ADA reported that 73.7% of dental hygiene students were White, 10% Hispanic, 6.8% Asian/Pacific Islander, 3.9% African American/Black, 0.6% Indian, and

1.5% were two or more races. (Admission; Enrollment; Survey of Dental Education Survey, 2015)

Table 3. *Ethnicity*

Ethnicity	<i>f</i>	%
Caucasian/White	271	95.42%
Hispanic/Latino	7	2.46%
African American/Black	3	1.06%
Native American	0	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	0.35%
Other	2	0.71%

Respondents were asked to identify the state they live in as illustrated in Table 4. The respondents were nearly divided in half with 51.76% ($n = 147$) residing in Ohio and 47.54% ($n = 135$) residing in Pennsylvania, and one from Maryland, while four chose not to answer.

Table 4. *State of Residence*

State	<i>f</i>	%
Ohio	147	51.76%
Pennsylvania	135	47.54%
Other	2	0.70%

Respondents were asked to report on the number of years they have been practicing and the school they attended. Almost half of the respondents have been practicing for over 25 years. The summary of responses to years practicing as a dental hygienist can be found in Appendix I. Respondents were also asked to indicate the dental hygiene school they graduated from. Forty-four percent ($n = 120$) of respondents attended schools in Ohio, 30% ($n = 82$) attended schools in Pennsylvania, and 27% ($n = 73$) attended schools elsewhere. A complete breakdown of respondents' schools attended can be found in Appendix I.

The respondents reported on whether they attended a two-year or four-year dental hygiene program. The majority of respondents attended a two-year program (79.34%, n = 219). This reflects the fact that most dental hygiene programs in Ohio and Pennsylvania are two-year programs. The YSU dental hygiene program was a two-year program until 2013. Currently, YSU only offers a four-year bachelor degree program. Table 5 provides a summary of responses to this question.

Table 5. *Type of Dental Hygiene Program Attended*

Program	<i>f</i>	%
2 year	235	84.22%
4 year	39	13.97%
Other	5	1.7%

Table 6 shows a summary of responses to the question of the highest educational level that was attained by the participants. Almost one third 32.85% (91) of the respondents reported that the highest level of education attained was a bachelor's degree followed by an associate degree at 32.49% (n =90), a master's degree at 27.80% (n =76), a Certificate at 2.89% (n =8), and 2.53% (n =7) have a doctoral degree. Four participants indicated another type of educational degree.

Table 6. *Level of Education*

Education	<i>f</i>	%
Bachelor degree	93	33.21%
Associate degree	90	32.14%
Master degree	78	27.86%
Certificate	8	2.86%
Doctoral degree	7	2.50%
Other	4	1.44%

Respondents were asked to identify the type of employment setting in which they work. Participants reported to working primarily in private practice settings and

community colleges. The majority of respondents (64.36%, n=179) reported to working in a private practice (dental office) setting. A complete summary of responses on work environments can be found in Appendix I.

Answers to Research Questions

The dental hygiene and program director surveys were analyzed and evaluated. The results are reported as they apply to each research questions.

Research Question One: What are the similarities between practicing URM dental hygienists and non-URM dental hygienists as to what motivated them to choose dental hygiene as a field of study? The first research question looked to identify what parallels could be found between URM dental hygienists and non-URM dental hygienists and their motivations for selecting dental hygiene as a career choice.

Research Question Two: What are the differences between practicing URM dental hygienists and non-URM dental hygienists as to what motivated them to choose dental hygiene as a field of study? The second research question examined differences between URM and non-URM individuals and their motivation for pursuing dental hygiene as a career.

For ease of understanding how participants responded to the survey questions, the respondents were divided into two groups identified as Underrepresented Minority (URM) and non-URM. Underrepresented minority or URM were the combined responses of those respondents who self-identified as any ethnicity other than Caucasian/White. The non-URM represented the responses of the participants who self-identified as Caucasian/White. The results of how each group answered the survey questions will be presented and discussed.

There were four questions on the survey sent to Ohio and Pennsylvania registered dental hygienists that provided respondents an opportunity to identify their reasons for choosing dental hygiene as a career. Analysis of responses to these questions illustrates the similarities and differences between the two groups of respondents. Two of the survey questions asked participants to select answers from a pre-defined list where they could select responses to the questions related to what interested them and what motivated them to choose dental hygiene. Another question asked participants to identify their primary motivator for choosing dental hygiene. Lastly, an open-ended question simply asked hygienists to talk about their personal experience associated with their career choice of dental hygiene. Responses to the survey questions were filtered to separate the responses of the URM and non-URM participants. The results are presented in separate tables for comparison.

A number of survey questions had the response option of “other (please specify)” followed by a comment box that allowed respondents to enter individual responses. Following an initial analysis, the data were coded and categorized into common themes. Survey Monkey has built-in features that assist in coding and categorizing qualitative responses. At first, a text analysis of qualitative responses was completed in Survey Monkey, the online survey tool. The text analysis provided a breakdown of frequently mentioned words in the responses. After reading each response and evaluating the text analysis, common themes were identified and each response was coded with a common descriptive word or phrase. Open-ended qualitative responses were analyzed in a similar fashion.

The respondents were asked to select from a list of items, the influences that most interested them in dental hygiene as a career choice. The following tables illustrate the similarities and differences between URM and non-URM response rates. In this question, respondents could select more than one answer.

Table 7. *URM Responses to What Interested Them in The Field of Dental Hygiene*

Reasons for interest in the field	<i>f</i>	%
Mentor guided	3	25.00%
Friend recommended	2	16.67%
Career day seminar	1	8.33%
Internet search	1	8.33%
Family referral	0	
Recruited	0	
Other*	4	40%

*Other responses included personal interest, experience as a dental assistant and high school programs.

Table 8. *Non-URM Responses to What Interested Them in The Field of Dental Hygiene*

Reasons for interest in the field	<i>f</i>	%
Family referral	46	17.42%
Friend recommended	41	15.53%
Mentor guided	40	15.15%
Internet search	13	4.92%
Career day seminar	10	3.79%
Recruited	3	1.14%
Other*	111	42.05%

*Other responses included personal interest, experience as a dental assistant and exposure to the dental profession.

Having a mentor as a guide, or having a friend recommend the profession, were the top reasons URM participants picked as motivators to become interested in the profession. Non-URM participants reported that family referral and a friend referral were the top reasons. There were a significant number of responses to the “other (please specify)” response option in this survey question. Having experience as a dental assistant before applying to

dental hygiene, having some exposure to dentistry, and a personal interest in dentistry were the most common themes that emerged from the other category.

A survey question asked participants to use a Likert scale to select from a list of motivators which represent their reasons for choosing dental hygiene as a career. Table 9 summarizes the URM participants' responses regarding their motivation for entering the dental hygiene profession. Table 10 summarizes the Non-URM participants' responses regarding their motivation for entering the dental hygiene profession. The weighted, top choices for URM respondents were that they were academically prepared for dental hygiene, independence, job availability, and service. Non-URM respondents' top choices were that they were academically prepared, income, job availability, and independence.

Table 9. *Motivation for URM Respondent Entering the Dental Hygiene Profession*

URM Responses to motivators	SA	A	U	D	SD	Weighted
Academically prepared for the program of study	18.18%	54.55%	18.18%	9.09%	0.00%	2.18
Independence	41.67%	33.33%	16.67%	8.33%	0.00%	1.92
Job availability	50.00%	33.33%	8.33%	8.33%	0.00%	1.75
Service	27.27%	72.73%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.75
Income	41.67%	50.00%	8.33%	0.00%	0.00%	1.67
Flexibility	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.50

Table 10. *Motivation for Non-URM Respondent Entering the Dental Hygiene Profession*

Non-URM Responses to motivators	SA	A	U	D	SD	Weighted
Academically prepared for the program of study	31.13%	37.74%	21.01%	7.00%	3.11%	2.13
Income	34.10%	47.51%	5.75%	8.81%	3.83%	2.01
Job availability	39.16%	37.64%	11.03%	9.13%	3.04%	1.99
Independence	37.16%	38.31%	15.33%	7.28%	1.92%	1.98
Service	38.37%	40.70%	15.89%	3.49%	1.55%	1.89
Flexibility	53.64%	35.25%	7.28%	3.07%	.77%	1.62

Another survey question associated with career choice, asked participants to select their primary motivation for entering the dental hygiene profession.

Table 11. *Primary Motivator for Career Selection (URM responses)*

Motivation	<i>f</i>	%
Income	5	41.67%
Service	3	25.00%
Independence	2	16.67%
Flexibility	1	8.33%
Job availability	1	8.33%
Other	0	0.00%

Table 12. *Primary Motivator for Career Selection (Non-URM responses)*

Motivation	<i>f</i>	%
Flexibility	62	23.57%
Income	60	22.81%
Other	46	17.49%
Service	43	16.35%
Job availability	26	9.89%
Independence	26	9.89%

In this question, participants were instructed to only select one response. Table 11 presents the responses to this query for URM dental hygienists. Table 12 summarizes the responses for Non-URM participants. Income was selected as a primary motivator for both groups of respondents. URM respondents ranked independence higher than the Non-URM respondents as a primary motivator.

Finally, an open-ended question was posed asking participants to: “Tell me about your personal experience. What led you to dental hygiene as a career?”

Table 13. *URM Personal Experiences for Choosing a Career in Dental Hygiene*

Personal Experience Themes	<i>f</i>	%
Influenced by a dental professional	4	40.00%
Prior dental assistant	4	40.00%
Pay	1	10.00%
High school careers' program	1	10.00%

Table 14. *Non-URM Personal Experiences for Choosing a Career in Dental Hygiene*

Personal Experience Themes	<i>f</i>	%
Influenced by a dental professional	68	28.84%
Prior dental assistant	52	22.13%
Flexibility	30	12.71%
Health care oriented	26	11.02%
Positive dental experience	20	8.47%
Other	13	5.51%
Pay	8	3.39%
High school careers' program	6	2.54%

URM responses included the influence of a dental professional and prior experience as a dental assistant as the top responses as seen in table 13. The following themes emerged in the non-URM participants' responses and included influence by a dental professional and prior experience as a dental assistant as reported in Table 14. URM and non-URM hygienists report that the number one motivation that lead them to a dental hygiene career was being influenced by a dental professional.

Research Question 3. What factors, such as the influence of a mentor, role model or participation in recruitment events most likely impact choosing dental hygiene as a career? A survey question asked participants if they had been in a mentor/mentee relationship which persuaded them to pursue dental hygiene. Table 15 summarizes the URM respondents experience with a mentor prior to entering the dental hygiene field. Most (80%, $n = 8$) of the URM respondents reported they had no relationship with a

mentor. Similarly, over two-thirds of non-URM respondents (78.71%) had no prior relationship with a mentor prior to entering dental hygiene. Table 16 reports on non-URM students' responses to a relationship with a mentor.

Table 15. *URM Responses to Having A Mentor*

Mentor	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	3	25%
No	9	80%

Table 16. *Non-URM Responses to Having A Mentor*

Mentor	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	56	21.21%
No	207	78.41%

Participants were asked if they have had any experience with diversity initiatives, such as student learning communities, remediation programs, and high school recruitment via career days that would help to recruit and retain more minority dental hygiene students. Over 80% of URM and non-minority dental hygienists responded that they had no experience with these initiatives.

Research Question 4. What are the opinions and experiences of dental hygienists on ways to improve the recruitment and retention of minority dental hygiene students?

This research question was answered by the survey question asking respondents: What suggestions do you have for recruiting and retaining minority dental hygiene students?

The response rates are presented in tables 17 and 18.

Table 17. *URM Responses to Recruiting Minority Students*

Suggestions	<i>f</i>	%
Increase Career Awareness	2	33.33%
Visit High Schools	2	33.33%

Table 18. *Non-URM Responses to Recruiting Minority Students*

Suggestions	<i>f</i>	%
Visit High Schools	33	18.13%
Increase Career Awareness	12	6.56%

Since this was an open-ended question, the responses were coded. Two major themes emerged; visiting high schools and increasing career awareness were the two most common responses.

Summary of Results for Program Directors' Survey

An electronic survey was sent to dental hygiene program directors in Ohio and Pennsylvania to determine the myriad of recruitment efforts that are currently used to attract students to dental hygiene. All the results of the dental hygiene program directors' survey can be found in Appendix J. The survey for the dental hygiene program directors was sent electronically to all 24 dental hygiene program directors in Ohio and Pennsylvania, with a response rate of 37.5% (n=9). The survey question analysis can be found in Appendix J. The directors were from a variety of educational settings including community college, university, schools of allied health, dental school, and technical college. The majority of directors (66.67%, n= 6) were from associate degree programs with an average of 24.6 graduates per year. The summary of responses to their educational settings can be found in Appendix J.

General questions on recruitment techniques and best practices were asked of program directors. Forty-four percent (n =4) personally visit high schools to recruit students, 85.71% (n =6) organize recruitment events, such as campus visit days or open house events, and 100% (n =9) participate in outreach events at their educational institution.

Additionally, directors were asked about funding for recruitment events and reported that 57% ($n=4$) do not have sufficient funding for recruitment events.

Program directors were also asked about their efforts to recruit URM students. None of the program directors reported that written recruitment material and /or digital materials focus on recruitment of students from underrepresented backgrounds. Over 70% (71.43%) reported that none of their recruitment events are specifically designed to recruit students from underrepresented minority backgrounds.

Using a Likert scale response, directors indicated that the types of students they are likely to recruit are students with a high GPA and high ACT/SAT scores. Several open-ended questions asked directors to identify their biggest challenges concerning recruiting students into their programs. There were three themes that emerged from their responses; lack of time (57.14% $n=4$), finding qualified applicants (42.86%, $n=3$), and lack of resources (42.86%, $n=3$).

Directors' responses to the three biggest challenges concerning recruitment of URM students were that students were academically underqualified (28.57%, $n=2$) and their schools were located in an area with low diversity (28.57%, $n=2$). Other responses included lack of scholarships, financial resources, and lack of minority mentors. Program directors identified open house events (50%, $n=3$) as one of the best practices for recruiting students into their programs.

Summary of Results for In-depth Interviews

Seventeen dental hygienists' participated in an in-depth interview. Participants included 12 African Americans, one Asian/Pacific Islander, one biracial

(Hispanic/Caucasian), one biracial (Black/Caucasian), one Hispanic, and one international student. Sixteen participants were female, and one was a male dental hygienist. Fifteen have practiced in Ohio, and two reside in Maryland. The number of years practicing ranged from less than one year to 22 years. Eight of the participants were graduates of YSU and nine graduated from other programs. Twelve participants graduated from two-year programs and five from four-year programs.

The recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed by two people who reviewed each transcript for accuracy and collaborated on the identification of common themes. Appendix L contains the in-depth interview transcripts. The transcripts were reviewed and coded for common themes that were related to the research questions. The identified themes were further categorized into subthemes. The results of the in-depth interview analysis inform an understanding of URM dental hygienists in three emerging themes showing that: (a) there are a variety of reasons for URM dental hygienists choosing to enter the dental hygiene profession, (b) URM dental hygienists report having varied personal experiences in their educational and professional settings, and (c) recruitment strategies to improve the number of URMs into the profession should strategically target minority students. Figure 1 depicts the themes and subthemes in a graphic chart along with the frequency of responses indicated by the number of responses out of seventeen interviews.

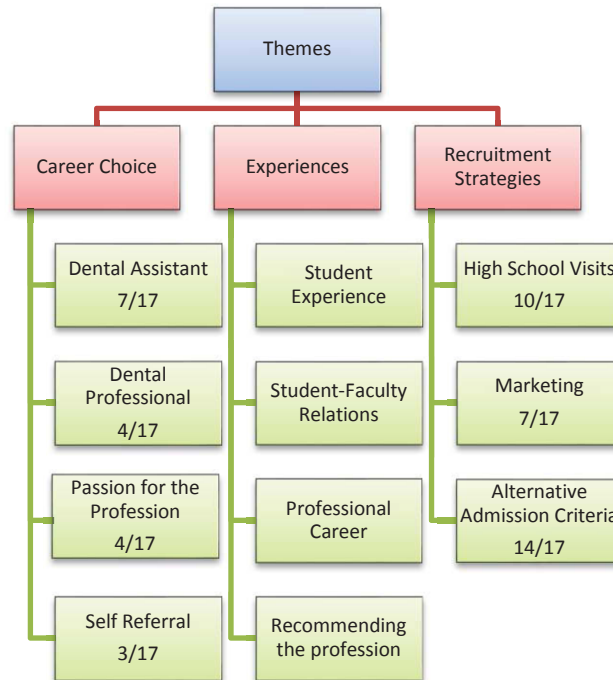


Figure 1. Themes and Subthemes of Qualitative In-Depth Interviews and Frequency of Responses.

Theme One: Reasons for choosing the profession

In the first theme of career choice, participants shared their earliest recollections of how they decided to enter the dental hygiene profession. Several subthemes emerged relating to this decision. These include dental assisting experience, encouragement by a dental professional, passion for the profession, or self-referral (meaning they chose the career on their own). The role of a mentor and school choice emerged as additional subthemes under career choice. The interview questions that were used were designed to initiate dialogue regarding the reasons for choosing a career in the dental hygiene profession. See Appendix F for in-depth interview questions. Participants also were asked about: what, or who, introduced them to the field; how their decision was made to choose

the college or university they attended; and if there was a particular person who guided them along the way.

Having experience as a dental assistant was the most common reason for choosing dental hygiene (7/17). These individuals provided descriptions and anecdotes on how their experience as dental assistants provided them the opportunity to see the need to pursue a degree in dental hygiene. One remarked; "...I was in the assisting dental system and I decided that I wanted to further my [education] because I really enjoyed being with patients and dentistry." Another dental assistant commented on her love of teeth and how meeting a dentist at church influenced her career choice; she explained: "...I was a dental assistant and once I became more familiar with the whole behind the scenes and background...I decided...that hygiene was more...of my field." Another remarked, "...so I went from graduating from high school to YSU going to Akron Medical and Dental Assisting School and that 10 years led me to the path of...dental hygiene..."

One participant was a dental assistant and also had a family member who was a dental professional. "... [my] brother-in-law is a dentist...I spoke to him about it and he said maybe you should do hygiene." Another participant on the verge of graduating with a business degree shared her experience; "...I was on the verge of graduating with my bachelor's degree in management information systems... I was talking to my dental hygienist...she said look into hygiene." One shared her first exposure to the dental field; "...my childhood dentist was an African American female..." Another recollected, "I remember at age 6, 7, I was very young telling my dentist I wanted to grow up and be just like him."

Some participants discovered the profession in other ways. Self-referral and a passion for the profession is why some chose to pursue the profession (3/17, 3/17). One stated, "...I wanted to do something in health professions and I knew I didn't want ...nursing so just as process of eliminations I went through the programs." Another mentioned attending a career fair at a local high school where someone told her that dental hygienists make pretty good money, don't work holidays or long hours: "she tried to sell me on dental hygiene and it worked...for all the wrong reasons honestly, money vacations and things like that." One participant started her career as a cosmetologist. She commented, "...I was a cosmetologist and I was realizing the pay rate for cosmetologists was up and down so I decided to go back to school...I researched dental hygiene that's when I saw it kind fit m personality more."

Two participants reported having a family member talk to them about a career as a dental hygienist. One dental hygienist explained: "[I was] about 9, I had a cousin ... and she was in the military and she was a dental hygienist in the military. Another explained when she was looking for a career change; "...it was my husband who first introduced me to the field."

Four participants had started out with the intention of going to dental school. For various reasons, their career plans changed and they pursued dental hygiene instead. One changed her mind about being a dentist after working as a dental assistant and closely observing the role of the dentist in a dental setting. She decided the role of the dental hygienist would be more compatible with her personality: "once I became more familiar with the whole behind the scenes and background and everything that came with being a dentist, I decided ...that hygiene...was more of my field." Another participant

commented, "... dental school and becoming a dental hygienist and after my attempt at the DAT for dental school that's when I leaned more toward hygiene about my junior or senior year in undergrad?

Participants were asked to discuss the role of a mentor in their decision to pursue dental hygiene. Most dental hygienists (11/17) reported that having a mentor was not part of their decision and success in graduating from a dental hygiene program. While many hygienists reported that it was a person such as a family member or dental professional who introduced them to the field of dental hygiene, or encouraged them to look into the field, most did not feel that an individual served as a mentor to them. When asked about the role of a mentor in their career success, some described that person as a role model rather than a mentor, "Um like I said the dentist that I did work for he was really like a role model person, he really didn't encourage me to go to hygiene school, me myself I think I had it in me that I wanted to do more." Another participant was inspired by a childhood dentist to pursue dental hygiene. "I remember at age 6,7 I was very young telling my dentist I wanted to grow up and be just like him." When asked if this person was considered a mentor, the response was, "...actually he played no role in ugh in my progress becoming a dental assistant and dental hygienist. [he] Played absolutely no role."

There were four dental hygienists who felt that their experience in a high school pipeline program called the Ohio Project provided a form of mentoring for them. The goal of the Ohio Project was to expose African American high school girls to the field of dentistry. During the summer they attended a dental school as paid dental assistants to become familiar with the profession. One student was referred by her own African

American dentist to the program and explained how she heard about the program; “I looked up to her and one year I was in high school and she kind of came to me and she said I think you’ll be perfect for this program...it was competitive-you really had to write an essay to get in-um you had to have a certain GPA-but it was for African American females to introduce them to dentistry.” “I would have never thought of dentistry had I not met her.”

Another participant talked about her experience in the Ohio Project and the influence of the people she met in the program but felt that the female dentists at the University motivated her but in a less influential way, and she stated: “... [I] had mentors, but would have pursued hygiene regardless.” Some hygienists did acknowledge there was an individual, although not specifically a mentor, who influenced their decision to pursue dental hygiene. One hygienist commented: “...no mentor per se, but hygienist in office encouraged me to pursue hygiene.”

Finally, the subtheme that emerged in relation to the decision to pursue dental hygiene was the choice of which college or university to attend. Participants generally chose a school that had a dental hygiene program that was close to home. One participant commented, “...I looked into YSU just it was close driving distance so that’s why I ended up there and they took all of my Purdue credits.” The decision to choose the school was overwhelmingly made by the student themselves and not influenced by a mentor or role model. Universities that offered scholarship and grant opportunities were important factors to some of the students, but overall the students attended the school that was the first to accept them. A participant reported she was fortunate to have money bestowed to her from a woman she was a caretaker for, “...I want to bless you with some

money to go to school or to do whatever you need to do...” The amount of money paid for her full educational experience.

Theme Two: Experiences

The second theme to emerge were the experiences reported by respondents in their educational and professional careers. Subthemes related to this were student interactions, faculty interactions, professional experience, and likelihood of recommending the profession to others. The first subtheme to emerge related to participants’ experiences as dental hygiene students. There were mixed responses reported by dental hygienists in their dental hygiene education experiences. Some dental hygienists reported that, oftentimes, they were concerned they were the only URM in their dental hygiene class which made them feel uncomfortable: “... I kept telling my mom I hope I’m not the only black one....”. A similar comment was made by another participant: “...I did not have a good experience with my classmates...students were from smaller towns ...they would tell me I’ve never seen a Black person in real life or up close. They definitely told me that. They would ask questions about my race and culture different things...people would shy away from me.” Others reported that they attended a school with much diversity and the feeling of isolation was not an issue. The international dental hygienist, who was interviewed, reported that there were several other international students in her class, “There was a young lady from Ukraine, Albania and Philippines.”

The second subtheme on student-faculty relations includes perspectives on the way participants were treated as students by dental hygiene faculty. Student–faculty relationships can impact the educational experience of URM students who already feel

isolated in a Caucasian/White-dominated academic setting. Personal testimony by participants in regard to faculty interactions revealed overall positive connections with faculty members in the dental hygiene programs. One of the participants remarked; ...I cannot say faculty responded to me any differently than the rest of the girls.” . Another commented: “...I didn’t feel any different because I had awesome professors....” A third commented, “At first when I first walked in to a small class It was kinda intimidating- feeling like-I don’t know anybody in there that’s why I stay to myself-I’m very quiet and I just felt a little uncomfortable ...” Another reflected on the cultural differences between African American and Caucasians. She stated, “ Um I found it to be somewhat challenging at times and I think the challenge was then because there were some cultural boundaries between Caucasians Asians African Americans and those of other diversities just not exactly know how to accept or deal with other cultures – you’re not used to being around those different cultures.”

The third subtheme under the theme of personal experience related to their professional careers. Participants were asked to talk about their careers as dental hygienists today. There were mixed responses on finding and maintaining employment as a URM dental hygienist. Successes, as well as challenges, were reported in the professional careers of the URM dental hygienists who were interviewed. One participant commented on wage issues, “Only thing is if you have something to regulate as far as wages – being paid fairly – I realize it something that’s hush, hush but somebody might be getting paid more than -a person getting paid something else but I realize since you can’t talk about the pay it’s hard to prove that it’s toward your race or just because of experience.” While many have had careers that have exceeded their expectations, others

discussed issues related to finding work, job satisfaction, and feelings of discrimination in the workplace. One hygienist remarked, “I remember when I went for an interview...and he said you’re very qualified but I’m afraid to hire you-and I said why – and he said I don’t know if my patients would stay....” Another commented on the challenges of finding work; “If I had known what I know now probably wouldn’t have been as eager to get into dental hygiene....” Some dental hygienists reported on a job market that is full of opportunity and rewarding, while others reported on a job market that is over-saturated with dental hygienists and unfulfilling. One reported, ...”I really don’t have many challenges-I know that other people do cause they might not be able to find full time work-but I’ve been very fortunate..” Another remarked, “ ..um, it’s kind of up and down. It’s like when I was subbing for about a year and um it was really busy sometimes and then it’s really slow ...” Another participant commented on the challenges of employment, “Well I have to be honest now I don’t tell them to go into dental hygiene I actually steer whether they’re Black White Hispanic or whoever that don’t go into the field reason being that it’s not lucrative any more -the dynamics of dental hygiene has changed.”

There are settings other than a dental office for dental hygienists to find employment. One dental hygienist reported that she has worked as an implant dental hygienist for several years and has never had trouble finding employment. As an African American hygienist, she replaced a Caucasian dental hygienist in that setting and remarked that patients seemed surprised when they first met her, but once they got to know her, they were fine. She explained that people are still surprised to see a minority in the role of a dental hygienist: “When someone sees you initially I think they can’t

grasp the idea of an African American cleaning their teeth just because there are so few of us.” Another participant is not currently practicing dental hygiene, “I am teaching dental assisting at a career center here in Columbus.”

One respondent has practiced in the same office setting since she graduated 11 years ago. In that practice, she has also had opportunities to work in management and experience the business side of dentistry. She recently expanded her career experience and began teaching part-time at a dental hygiene program. She commented, “...there’s a lot of benefits from being in the profession but you don’t just necessarily have to be in an office setting you can have other career opportunities other than just being a dental hygienist...”

While some dental hygienists reported successful and varied employment opportunities, others have faced challenges in finding a position suited to their professional goals. Some attributed employment issues to a slow economy or a saturation of dental hygienists in their geographic location; others felt a bias toward them when applying for jobs. A participant, who has been a dental hygienist for 20 years, shared her frustration in finding employment; “...sometimes I do think that my nationality inhibits me getting the job... just cause I’m African American.” A more recent graduate reported: “...I thought it would be a lot easier to get a job...it’s a lot harder and the pay rate wasn’t what I expected ...I can’t prove if it was my race or not I mean sometimes you do feel like that but I don’t have any proof of that um and I think that kinda affects you sometimes and that’s my personal perspective and how I feel....” One participant described her experience of looking for her first job after graduation: “I sent out so many

applicants everywhere and I think I will walk into businesses to give them my application but I couldn't even get an interview....”

The fourth subtheme under the theme of personal experience was the likelihood of recommending this profession to others and serving as a mentor. The majority of participants were eager to encourage others to go into the dental hygiene profession and provided anecdotes of how they have used their time to visit high schools, talk to interested students, family and friends, and mentored others into the profession. One of the participants teaches dental assisting students and considers herself a mentor for future URM dental hygienists; “that’s one of the things I look at is trying to get more minorities, more people of color both male and female into dentistry whether they are interested in hygiene or not I want to encourage them.” Another participant expressed her passion for visiting predominantly African American schools and talking about the profession. She shared an example of taking a mentee with her to a ceremony where she was receiving an award for dental hygiene; “I won an award and I took her to my award ceremony you know just so I can have her around the environment. She’s an African American and I’m just trying to encourage her.”

Even though many of the URM dental hygienists interviewed for this investigation faced some challenges related to the lack of job opportunities or prejudice in the workplace, nearly all of the participants would recommend the profession to others. One remarked; “I think I would influence others to become a dental hygienist because I know that there’s a lot of benefits from being in the profession but you don’t just necessarily have to be in an office setting....” Participants reported they would be honest with the individual and share the good and not so good things about the profession. Several of the

participants who hesitated to recommend the profession to others said that they did feel it would be a good profession if someone was only interested in part-time employment, because finding full time positions with benefits was a challenge. Another commented, “I always um felt like it was a great career for someone especially if they wanted to work part-time and be a mom.”

Theme Three: Recruitment Strategies

The third theme to emerge was the type of recruitment strategies needed to improve the number of URM dental hygienists. Subthemes related to this were outreach to high school students, use of marketing, and alternative admission criteria.

The first subtheme to emerge under recruitment strategies was the suggestion of high school visits as an effective way to spread the word about dental hygiene. This strategy was suggested by 10/17 interviewees to introduce URM students into the field at an earlier point in their academic career; “...attend like going into high schools in the inner city where there’s a lot of minorities and ...having a minority go and speak and tell them their story... think that would really encourage more people to apply to the program.” A similar comment was made; “...if you could like go to the high schools cause that’s where you really start preparing to see what you want to do with your career.” Still another felt strongly about recruitment and suggested; “...now is the time after 10th or 11th grade getting things in line so you can be accepted into hygiene school. I think we can plug in when they have a thirst for allied health profession, that’s when we have to navigate and tap in.” Lastly, one hygienist felt that talking about the profession itself was not enough and high school students should know why diversity is needed in the profession; “...do more than talk to them about getting into dentistry/dental hygiene because of their race.

Maybe you could show them statistics/numbers in regards to the poor oral health in their race.” Another reflected on the need to increase diversity, “. . .we mirror what we see – so if you’re seeing Caucasian doctors and lawyers and whatever – it’s like oh I can do that - that’s what I’m supposed to be doing – whereas if you’d never see that – there’s nobody to talk to about it or motivate because they’re not there so I have to entrust something that doesn’t look like me so I have to trust you.”

The second subtheme under recruitment that emerged was the use of marketing as a way to educate potential dental hygiene students about the profession. One of the in-depth questions asked participants to comment on the effectiveness of traditional university efforts to attract students, such as open-house programs, brochures, and campus tours. Open-house programs and campus tours were considered by participants to be effective for students who were already on campus and have likely made a career choice. These efforts were not the most effective for recruiting high school students. Participants suggested additional efforts were needed. “We need to express how important the role of the hygienist is and how much you can do to reach people and really help them. . .” Another commented, “. . .campus tours aren’t effective if there’s only 4.3% African American students in dental hygiene schools.”

While brochures that advertise the dental hygiene program may be informational, they were not considered an effective recruitment tool by participants. If brochures are to be effective, they should reflect diversity as mentioned by one participant; “I think the effectiveness can ultimately be increased if on those brochures it maybe shows someone who is like the person they are being given to so your recruitment to African Americans. . . should reflect that.” Using alumni to recruit was another recommendation

by one of the participants, “I mean I know there’s not many minority dental hygienists – so I would think maybe someone from the university maybe along with a minority hygienist maybe speaking together since the hygienist knows what the profession is all about they can kinda get the insight on the career and then maybe just a minority from the university to back them up.”

Participants also suggested the use of media, such as TV, Internet, and social media to recruit students; “...if you have the money to market, you know the TV, the Internet things that people use today and don’t see advertisements for that um profession.”(11). Another commented: “...maybe media time-you know you don’t see any advertisements of YSU Dental Hygiene Program.” “The only thing I can think of is media or I’m on Facebook every now and then and Facebook does have where you have opportunities for going to school for dental hygiene so they do some advertising.” Another commented, “we just have to get it out there whether it’s word of mouth or I feel like a marketing standpoint putting it on television so programs need to find a way to get money to invest – put it on Chanel 10 right after the news.”

There were concerns shared from several participants that the general public is not aware of the difference between a *dental assistant* and a *dental hygienist*. Visiting high school and the use of media could also be used to educate the public on the misperception that exists between the roles of a dental assistant versus those of a dental hygienist. One participant said; “...first of all the average person does not know what a hygienist is-get get us mixed up with assistants with dentists.” Another commented; “When people hear dentistry they think that you have to be a dentist, but they don’t really know about all the various aspects of the profession that make it work...”

The third subtheme to emerge was the use of alternative admission criteria to increase URM students in dental hygiene. Most dental hygienists agree that academics, such as a high GPA, should play a major role in the decision to accept students into dental hygiene programs. There are other qualities that could be considered when evaluating candidates for acceptance into a dental hygiene program including: motivation, a passion for the field, community involvement, leadership experience, and good communication skills. All of these qualities may be considered in addition to academics. One former dental hygiene program director commented; “we used to have interviews we used to look at things like service. And um I believe that would make more of diverse pool but um I think we need to reach farther back in the schools so that different people actually see that this a career option for them.” Another participant commented, “We’ve had this discussion when I was still with the college as far the admission process and I understand there’s cons and pros but I really do like the idea of interviews. I really do but there’s a lot of negativity associated with that and I understand that I really do but if it’s not interview maybe they can write 250 words why they want to do it what motivates them.”

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the motivations of dental hygienists to choose dental hygiene as a career, their experiences in the profession, and how recruitment techniques can increase the number of URM into the profession.

Phase one of this investigation used two survey instruments to gather data to better understand the opinions of dental hygienists in Ohio and Pennsylvania, in regard to the underrepresentation of minority dental hygienists, and to gather information on the

recruitment techniques reported by dental hygiene program directors. The most common reason for URM students entering the profession was having prior experience as a dental assistant or being influenced by a dental professional. None of the dental hygiene program directors reported that their recruitment efforts specifically target URM students.

Analysis of the in-depth interviews also revealed that prior dental assisting experience and exposure to the profession by a dental professional were influential in their decision to become a dental hygienist. Results of the interviews identified targeted recruitment techniques, such as visits to middle and high schools, to expose students to the profession, marketing to millennials, and the use of alternative admission criteria. Chapter 5 will discuss the findings, conclusions, and implications of the study.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusions

The objective of this mixed method investigation was to explore reasons for the lack of racial and ethnic diversity in dental hygiene and identify ways to improve the recruitment of URM dental hygiene students. While other researchers have looked at the reasons for the lack of diversity, as well as minority recruitment efforts, and made recommendations, the dilemma persists. The purpose of this study was three-fold. First the study aimed to explore the experiences and opinions of dental hygienists to discover reasons for choosing the profession, their perspectives on the diversity dilemma, and effective recruitment efforts by way of an electronic survey questionnaire. Secondly, program directors were surveyed to identify recruitment techniques for dental hygiene programs. Lastly, URM dental hygienists were interviewed to assess reasons for choosing the dental hygiene profession, and recruitment techniques for increasing the number of URM dental hygiene students.

Four research questions were formed which laid the foundation to narrow the focus of this investigation. The responses to these questions aimed to reveal similarities and differences between URM and non-URM dental hygiene students regarding their motivations for choosing dental hygiene as a career, and recruitment efforts that are likely to improve the number of minority dental hygienists.

1. What are the similarities between practicing URM dental hygienists and non-URM

dental hygienists as to what motivated them to choose dental hygiene as a field of study?

2. What are the differences between practicing URM dental hygienists and non-URM dental hygienists as to what motivated them to choose dental hygiene as a field of study.

3. What factors, such as the influence of a mentor, role model, or participation in recruitment events, most likely impact choosing dental hygiene as a career?

4. What are the opinions and experiences of URM dental hygienists on ways to improve the recruitment and retention of URM dental hygiene students?

Summary of Results

This investigation began with collecting quantitative data on two groups whose opinions would be vital to the topic of URM in the dental hygiene profession: dental hygienists and dental hygiene program directors. Two separate questionnaires were used to establish contextual information and guide the researcher in the development of in-depth interview questions used as a framework for interviews with URM dental hygienists. Following the descriptive analysis of the quantitative data, in-depth personal interviews with 17 dental hygienists were completed. A discussion of the results as they relate to the research question follows.

Research Question 1. What are the similarities between practicing URM dental hygienists and non-URM dental hygienists as to what motivated them to choose dental hygiene as a field of study?

There were some commonalities between URM dental hygienists and non-URM dental hygienists. In the survey data statistics, the two most common reasons for URM and non-URM dental hygienists to choose a career in dental hygiene were the same. The reasons included referral by a dental professional and prior dental assisting experience.

The findings from the in-depth interviews concerning the reasons for choosing the dental hygiene profession were consistent with the data reported in previous studies. These results differ slightly from a study on the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic groups in the dental hygiene profession (Sandino & Rowe, 2014). That study reported that almost all of the participants had a person who influenced them to become a dental hygienist. While many of the respondents in this study did mention the influence of a person, an even greater influence was prior dental assisting experience. This is significant because dental hygiene programs may consider focusing recruitment efforts toward dental assisting programs as a way to increase URM students.

2. What are the differences between practicing URM dental hygienists and non-URM dental hygienists as to what motivated them to choose dental hygiene as a field of study?

The difference that was noted between URM and non-URM reasons for career choice showed up as the third most common reason. Non-URM participants reported the flexibility of the profession including the working hours and the pay as a common reason they chose it as a career. URM participants reported that they wanted to work in a health-related career.

Another significant difference identified between non-URM and URM dental hygienists was a pipeline program that four of the interview participants discussed. This program was identified as a pivotal experience in the lives of the four URM dental hygienists. Moore (2013) also reported on the need to continue the use of pipeline programs to recruit and retain minority dental hygiene students.

3. What factors, such as the influence of a mentor, role model, or participation in recruitment, events most likely impact choosing dental hygiene as a career?

When questioned about the role of a mentor in helping to make the decision to choose dental hygiene, most participants including both URM and non-URM reported that a mentor was not significant in guiding their career path to dental hygiene. If an individual did have an influence on them, it was reported as more of a role model rather than a mentor-mentee experience.

Interview participants were asked about recruitment events and their influence on pursuing dental hygiene. These recruitment events, such as open house programs and campus tours, were not reported as a major factor in the decision to choose dental hygiene. Most participants reported that their decision to apply to dental hygiene was most often made before they decided what educational setting they were attending. More outreach to high school students to stimulate interest in the profession is needed.

4. What are the opinions and experiences of URM dental hygienists on ways to improve the recruitment and retention of URM dental hygiene students?

Participants had practical suggestions for increasing the number of URM students through recruitment activities. The most common suggestion was to visit students in high schools. A study by Inglehart et al. (2014) reported on a project that paired low-income high school students with dental and dental hygiene students. Results showed a positive outcome for increasing high school students' interest in the dental profession. If dental hygiene programs wait until students are enrolled in college to recruit, it may be too late to interest them in the profession. A suggestion was also made that dental hygiene

students could speak at a first-year college experience course to generate interest in the profession for those “undecided” students.

The results of this study were consistent with the findings of a study by Sandino and Rowe (2014) on underrepresented racial and ethnic groups entering the dental hygiene profession (Sandino & Rowe, 2014). Even though the results of the reasons for choosing a career slightly differ, the overall recommendations of the Sandino and Rowe (2014) study can be confirmed with this investigation that three strategies are needed to recruit more URM students: more outreach programs, increased mentoring by URM dental professionals, and altered admission criteria (Sandino & Rowe, 2014).

A recent study by Hunter, Kinney and Inglehart (2015) surveyed dental hygiene program directors and reported that only 17% of program directors considered it a priority to recruit URM students. This is similar to the findings of this study, in which only 30% of program directors reported that recruitment events are specifically designed to recruit students from URM backgrounds. While increasing URM student, faculty, and staff diversity is a Council on Dental Accreditation (CODA) standard for dental schools in the U.S., it is not a required standard for dental hygiene programs, which could explain the lack of effort to recruit URM into dental hygiene programs.

Dental hygienists report that there is confusion in the public perception concerning the difference between a *dental assistant* and a *dental hygienist*. The lack of knowledge in URM communities regarding the different roles of professionals in the dental office was identified as a reason for lack of URM entering the profession. The lack of knowledge among minorities combined with a lack of minorities exposed to the dental

field further compounds the lack of minority representation in the profession. This was an unexpected result and deserves further investigation.

Policy

This investigation revealed some of the feelings of isolation in the classroom and professional setting faced by URM dental hygienists. URM students reported feelings of being uncomfortable, anxious, and uneasy about being the only minority student during their dental hygiene education. A lack of diversity in an educational or professional environment can unintentionally lead to racial or ethnic generalizations and a lack of sensitivity toward cultures. This supports the need for cultural competency training for students, staff, and faculty. In February, 2016, Senate Bill 33 was introduced into the Ohio Senate, to address the need for cultural competency training for Ohio health professionals. Senate Bill 33 titled *Health Care Professionals-Instruction in Cultural Competency*, if passed, will enact section 4743.08 of the Ohio Revised Code to require certain health care professionals in Ohio to complete instruction in cultural competency. Dental hygienists are not specifically mentioned in the bill at the present time, but are considered an interested party in the bill, because the Ohio State Dental Board, which regulates dental hygienists, falls under the regulatory structure of Senate Bill 33. The Ohio Dental Hygienists' Association supports the efforts behind the bill and is currently in the process of meeting the requirements in the bill. The bill was assigned to the Health and Services Committee and is still under consideration.

CODA includes cultural competency in its manual of current accreditation standards for dental hygiene education programs. Additionally, the ADHA has recently issued a white paper on the future of dental hygiene education and practice. The paper

titled, *Transforming Dental Hygiene Education and the Profession for the 21st Century* (2015) states,

A myriad of societal factors and new research support the need for dental hygiene's growth and expansion. Demographic trends indicate that the U.S. population is changing, with an increase in underserved patients and demographic groups that are underrepresented in both patient and practitioner populations. Many of the underserved populations will present with complex health care needs including complications that far exceed oral concerns. Behavioral, financial, cultural and medical issues will have to be addressed, as they often cannot be separated from oral health needs. All of these trends will be instrumental in defining future dental hygiene roles, as meeting societal needs will require oral health care providers from more backgrounds, in more roles, and in more settings than just the traditional private practice dental office. (p. 8)

Limitations

Several limitations were identified at the conclusion of this investigation. The limitations of the questionnaires will be identified first, followed by the limitations identified with the in-depth interview process.

The first limitation related to the questionnaire was in the selection of the sample. The electronic survey that was mailed to Ohio and Pennsylvania dental hygienists was a convenience sample. The questionnaire was sent to members of the ADHA. Only about 10% of dental hygienists in Ohio belong to this organization, so it was not representative of the entire population of dental hygienists. This convenience sample was used because

it was the largest collection of dental hygienists' e-mail addresses that were readily available.

A second limitation was related to the survey question answer choices. If this study were repeated, some of the question responses in the dental hygiene and program director surveys should be changed because there were too many "other" responses selected. This made the results of individual questions difficult to analyze. If this study were repeated, including more options would improve the questionnaire. The option of "prior dental hygiene work experience" was omitted as an answer choice in one of the questions.

Successes and Challenges of In-depth Interviewing

Qualitative, in-depth interviewing is inherently a long process that results in unexpected successes and challenges. The unexpected successes enhanced the outcomes of the interviews. Participants were open and generous with their time and opinions, did not appear to be bored or uncomfortable with questioning length or content, and provided thoughtful insights. Secondly, the interview questions used in the in-depth interviews were designed to elicit both specific and open-ended responses. The variety of questions focused the participants to stay on topic, provide thoughtful responses, and, yet, not give their whole life story. Not only did participants offer thoughtful comments, one even sent an e-mail after the interview to include additional feedback on recruitment ideas. Lastly, a friendly rapport was established prior to the interview that resulted in participants opening up to the researcher, whether they had met before or not.

In-depth interviewing does not come without challenges. Finding participants who met the inclusion criteria of a URM dental hygienist practicing in Ohio and Pennsylvania was not easy. Identifying participants who met the criteria was accomplished in several ways. The first way to identify potential participants was the questionnaire mailed to 1,289 dental hygienists in Ohio and Pennsylvania. Participants were asked to provide contact information at the completion of the survey to participate in an interview. This method resulted in only one interested individual who, when contacted for an interview, failed to respond. The first to agree for an interview were those who were part-time faculty at a local university. The National Dental Hygiene Association (NDHA), that represents minority dental hygienists, was also contacted to identify participants in Ohio and Pennsylvania, but none of those contacts resulted in interviews.

The best success in identifying interviewees names came by contacting URM dental hygienists who are part-time faculty at YSU, and were also YSU alumni. The office of alumni affairs provided home addresses, e-mail addresses, or phone numbers. The state dental board website was accessed for addresses for dental hygienists who met the criteria to be interviewed. Phone messages were left, if a phone number was available, but texting a message yield the quickest response. The time of first contact, until the interview, averaged about two weeks. At the completion of each interview, names and contact information were requested for other URMs who might be interested in sharing their story. Some of these referrals were successful, some were not. Overall, the logistics of scheduling and conducting the interviews often took multiple letters, e-mails, phone calls, and texts to schedule, confirm, and conduct the interviews.

Tape recording an interview can present challenges such as technical issues. An interview that was conducted over Skype was interrupted when the live streaming froze. In another case, the sound failed to work. In addition, a face-time call was dropped and had to be re-scheduled.

Another limitation of the in-depth interviewing was related to the interview setting. While most of the interviews were done face-to-face, some of the participants preferred to be interviewed on Skype and Face Time. While this was convenient for the individual being interviewed, it was not ideal. Talking to someone face-to-face allows for better communication and rapport to be established. Eye movements and other non-verbal gestures are more easily detected in the person.

Finally, outcomes would likely be different if conducted in other geographic locations in the US. Areas such as Atlanta, Georgia, and Washington, DC, have more diversity as reported by two of the interviewees.

Seventeen dental hygienists were interviewed. In qualitative analysis, the number of interviewees is not a predetermined number. A researcher can generally stop interviewing when similar stories and few new themes or information emerge (Weiss, 1994).

Bias

As an interviewer, it is desirable to avoid bias and the use of leading questions toward a desired response; however, some bias is inevitable. For example, interviewees were very open in their responses. When questioned about their experience in dental hygiene school, some reported that although they felt isolated in the classroom as the only minority student, they reported overall positive experiences with dental hygiene faculty.

This response, while it may have been honest and genuine, may also have been influenced by the fact that the interviewer was a dental hygiene faculty member. Most of the interviewees were aware the interviewer was a dental hygiene instructor, either before or during the interview. This may have biased or tempered the responses since an instructor is viewed as an authority figure. Bias may also have influenced the participants' responses since the interviewer was Caucasian. All of the interviews were done either in person or with Facetime or Skype. The participants' openness and candidness may have been different if the interviewer presented with a background more similar to theirs.

Recommendations for Future Research

Additional research is recommended to further study ways to increase the number of URM dental hygienists in the dental hygiene profession. The following are recommendations and suggestions to further develop and confirm the findings of this research.

1. This study sought the perspectives and experiences of dental hygienists through personal interviews. This study could be replicated with another sample of dental hygienists in a different geographic region to compare findings.
2. Many dental hygienists are former dental assistants. A study on ways to target and recruit URM dental assistants into dental hygiene programs could enhance the recruitment efforts of dental hygiene programs to attract more URM students.
3. An investigation into the availability of culturally relevant literature, use of social media, and high school recruitment activities would provide further information on recruitment best practices for dental hygiene program directors.

4. Mentoring as a way to expose and encourage URM students to choose dental hygiene as a profession has been underutilized. Investigate the use of URM dental hygiene alumni to reach out to dental assisting schools, middle schools, high schools, and other entities to encourage mentoring.
5. Admissions and recruitment personnel should be aware of the lack of diversity in the health professions and make efforts to discuss careers that traditionally lack diversity. Investigate the knowledge of admission and recruitment personnel on the lack of diversity in dental hygiene.
6. URM dental hygienists interviewed in this investigation expressed a concern with the public's knowledge of the difference between a dental assistant and a dental hygienist. Study how to better market the profession and educate the public to define the roles of dental assistants versus dental hygienists.
7. Social media is one of the common ways to reach members of the millennials generations. Investigate the use of social media such as Instagram, Vine, and Snapchat, and their use in marketing the dental hygiene profession to URM minorities.
8. A longitudinal study of the participants who participated in the in-depth interviews could be done to learn how the experiences of URM dental hygienists change over time.
9. Finding and maintaining employment was identified as a challenge for some URM dental hygienists. Identify workplace obstacles faced by URM dental hygienists

and how educational institutions can provide support to URM students to secure employment after graduation.

10. Investigate the influence of a student's social class and social economic status prior to enrolling in a dental hygiene program and how it may impact students' exposure to dental careers.
11. Consider a study on evaluating the career perception that dental hygiene offers more part-time work as opposed to full time employment and how this impacts career choice.

Implications

Dental hygiene students, practicing dental hygiene professionals, and dental hygiene educators can all benefit from attaining a more ethnically and racially diverse profession. Many of the URM participants reflected on their dental hygiene education experience and reported that they were the only minority in their dental hygiene class. Increasing diversity can alleviate some of the feelings of isolation and segregation. Dental hygiene professionals reported on experiences of discrimination and the lack of a support system of other URM professionals. Creating a more diverse workforce will likely create greater exposure of URM students and increase the number of role models. Dental hygiene program directors can use the results of this study to increase their awareness of the challenges faced by minority students and best practices for recruiting URM students. While program directors place importance on the need to recruit for diversity, targeted recruitment efforts are not being utilized. Looking at alternative admission criteria should also be considered. Admitting students primarily on GPA is widely used as a criterion for accepting students, but may be an impediment to increasing diversity. Programs may

consider reevaluating exiting goals for their program and include one that reflects a need to accept students that mirror the population of the surrounding area. The results of this study offer further understanding of the reasons for the lack of URM in the dental hygiene profession. Lastly, the results confirm the need to use a variety of recruitment techniques to attract minority students.

Conclusions

A surprising revelation was the number of URM hygienists who, despite facing professional and personal obstacles as dental hygienists, are willing to encourage others to go into the profession. Many of these hygienists also show support for participating in recruitment activities by serving as mentors to encourage high school students and dental assistants to pursue dental hygiene.

It is apparent that increasing diversity will not occur naturally. Focused efforts are needed to increase the opportunities for URM in the dental hygiene profession. Visits to middle school and high schools by URM dental hygienists, creating culturally diverse literature, educating the public on the various dental roles, marketing the profession with social media, and creating a network to eliminate isolation in the workforce are a few of the ways to address the diversity dilemma.

This study was developed because of a notion that there were challenges to being an URM dental hygiene student and a need for better recruitment efforts. The results of this study confirmed there are challenges for URM dental hygiene professionals and solidified the need for greater awareness and efforts in the recruitment and retention of URM dental hygienists.

Dental hygiene educators should recognize and be sensitive to the cultural differences among URM and non-URM dental hygiene students and be mindful of the classroom climate. Dental hygiene program directors can use the information in this study to develop recruitment activities and materials that specifically attract minority students. Recruitment materials such as brochures, media, and other materials must demonstrate cultural diversity.

As the U.S. becomes more culturally diverse, more minority dental hygiene providers are needed to serve these populations and decrease the disparity that exists in oral health care treatment. Understanding how URMs decide to choose the dental hygiene profession is essential to improving recruitment efforts and increasing racial and ethnic diversity among dental hygiene professionals.

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Appendix A

List of Abbreviations

ADA – American Dental Association

ADEA- American Dental Education Association

ADHA – American Dental Hygienists’ Association

NDHA – National Dental Hygiene Association

URM – Underrepresented Minority

YSU – Youngstown State University

Appendix B

Informed Consent for Dental Hygiene Survey

You are being asked to take part voluntarily in the research project described below. Please take your time making a decision and feel free to discuss it with your friends and family. Before agreeing to take part in this research study, it is important that you read the consent form that describes the study.

Dear Registered Dental Hygienist,

My name is Diane Kandray and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology and Leadership in the Beeghly College of Education at Youngstown State University. I am conducting a study to investigate factors that influence your career choice of dental hygiene and recruitment strategies for dental hygiene students. Approximately, 1200 subjects will be asked to participate in this study. You are being asked to be in the study because you are a registered dental hygienist. This study is unrelated to the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) and no benefits entitled to the ADHA will be lost if you choose not to participate.

In this study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire. I will also need to collect information to describe you such as race, education level, etc. Your participation in this survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

There are no known risks associated with this research. The study may include risks that are unknown at this time. The harm may include a breach of privacy and confidentiality if the results were connected to your name or e-mail. The likelihood that you will be harmed is minimized because we will collect your response data in a way that will not connect your name to your responses on the questionnaire.

There will be no direct benefits to you for taking part in this study. The benefits to you from being in this study are your contributions to identifying the most effective recruitment techniques for dental hygiene students.

Your privacy is important and I will handle all information collected about you in a confidential manner. I will report the results of the project in a way that will not identify you. I do plan to use the results for educational purposes and presentations outside of doctoral education.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study. If you do not take part in the study, there will be no penalty. If you choose to take part, you have the right to stop at any time.

Funding for this study is provided by the investigator. There are no direct costs to you.

If you have questions about this research project please contact Dr. Karen Larwin, khlarwin@ysu.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research project, you may contact the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs at YSU (330-941-2377) or YSUIRB@ysu.edu.

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important.

Appendix C

Dental Hygiene Survey

1. What is your gender?
 - a. female
 - b. male
 - c. Other (please specify)
2. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. African American/Black
 - b. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - c. Caucasian/White
 - d. Hispanic/Latino
 - e. Native American
 - f. Other (please specify)
3. In which state do you currently reside?
 - a. Ohio
 - b. Pennsylvania
 - c. Other (please specify)
4. How many years have you been practicing as a dental hygienist? _____
5. From what school and what year did you graduate from a dental hygiene program? _____
6. As a dental hygiene student, did you attend a two-year or four-year dental hygiene program?
 - a. Two-year
 - b. Four-year
 - c. Other (please specify)
7. Are you licensed in more than one state?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. What is the highest educational level you have attained?
 - a. Certificate
 - b. Associate degree
 - c. Bachelor degree
 - d. Master degree
 - e. Doctoral degree
 - f. Other (please specify)

9. In what type of dental hygiene environment are you employed? Please select all that apply.
- Private practice (dental office)
 - Community college
 - Public college or school of dentistry
 - Private college or school of dentistry
 - Public university, not in a dental school or college
 - Private technical institute, technical college or career institute
 - Public technical institute, technical college or career institute
 - Public health (correctional facilities, USN, USAF).
 - Corporate (sales, insurance, administration)
 - Other (please specify)
10. How did you become interested in the field of dental hygiene? Please select all that apply.
- Career day seminar
 - Mentor guided
 - Family referral
 - Friend recommended
 - Internal search
 - Recruited
 - Other (please specify)
11. Did you take courses or obtain any education prior to entering the dental hygiene program?
- Associate degree
 - Bachelor degree
 - Non-credit classes
 - Prerequisites
 - Was enrolled in another major and switched to dental hygiene
 - None of the above
 - Other (please specify)
12. In dental hygiene school, you were the recipient of: (Please select all that apply)

	School Sponsored		Dental Hygiene Organization	
	Program(s)		Sponsored Programs(s)	
a. Tutoring	Yes	No	Yes	No
b. Mentoring	Yes	No	Yes	No
c. Faculty Advising	Yes	No	Yes	No

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|----|-----|----|
| d. Leadership Training | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| e. Financial Scholarship | Yes | No | Yes | No |

13. The items shown below motivated you to enter the dental hygiene profession:

Please indicate your response with an X or √.

(SA= strongly agree / A= agree / U= undecided / D= Disagree / SD = strongly disagree)

- | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| a. Income | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| b. Job availability | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| c. Service | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| d. Independence | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| e. Flexibility | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| f. Academically prepared for the
program of study | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

14. Did you apply to other health professions' programs when you applied to dental hygiene?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Other (please specify)

15. What was your primary motivation for entering the dental hygiene profession?

(Choose 1 [one])

- a. Income
- b. Job availability
- d. Service
- e. Independence
- f. Flexibility
- g. Other (please specify)

16. Have you been in a mentor/mentee relationship which persuaded you to pursue your career in dental hygiene?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Other (please specify)

17. I am interested in the following:

(SA= strongly agree / A= agree / U= undecided / D= Disagree / SD = strongly disagree)

Please indicate your response with an X or √.

	SA	A	U	D	SD
a. Mentoring high school students	___	___	___	___	___
b. Mentoring dental hygiene students	___	___	___	___	___
c. Facilitating career day seminars	___	___	___	___	___
d. Tutoring dental hygiene students	___	___	___	___	___

18. Tell me about your personal experience. What led you to dental hygiene as a career?

19. What do you think would encourage more individuals to follow your career path?

20. Do you think there are a disproportionate number of minority dental hygienists within the profession in comparison to the population served?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Other (please specify)

21. If you responded “yes” in previous question (#20), why do you think there are disproportionate minority dental hygienists within the profession in comparison to the population served?

22. What role do you think professional organizations (such as the American Dental Hygienists’ association, Ohio Dental Hygienists’ Association or Pennsylvania Dental Hygienists’ Association) have (if any) in mentoring minority dental hygiene students for recruitment and retention in allied health programs?

23. Have you had any experience with diversity initiatives (student learning communities, remediation programs, and high school recruitment via career days) that would help to recruit and retain more minority dental hygiene students? Please explain.

24. What suggestions do you have for recruiting and retaining minority dental hygiene students?

25. What impact do you speculate those recruitment and retention techniques will have (if any) on the number of minority dental hygiene students within dental hygiene programs of study?

26. If you responded to question #2, that you identify with a racial or ethnic group other than Caucasian/White, would you be willing to take part in a short telephone or face to face interview for more in-depth inquiry on this topic?

End of Survey

Appendix D

Recruitment e-mail wording:

Dear Dental Hygiene Program Director,

My name is Diane Kandray and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology and Leadership in the Beeghly College of Education at Youngstown State University. I am conducting a study to investigate recruitment strategies for dental hygiene students. Please use the following link (link will be inserted here) to access the survey. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

If you have questions about this research project please contact Dr. Karen Larwin, khlarwin@ysu.edu.

Diane Kandray

Informed Consent for Dental Hygiene Program Director's Survey

Dear Program Director,

My name is Diane Kandray and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology and Leadership in the Beeghly College of Education at Youngstown State University. I am conducting a study to investigate factors that influence career choice of dental hygiene and recruitment strategies for dental hygiene students. In this study you will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Your participation in this survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

You may be at risk of harm because of this research. The harm may include a breach of privacy and confidentiality if the results were connected to your name or e-mail. The likelihood that you will be harmed is minimized because we will collect your response data in a way that will not connect your name to your responses on the questionnaire.

The benefits to you from being in this study are your contributions to identifying the most effective recruitment techniques for dental hygiene students.

Your privacy is important and I will handle all information collected about you in a confidential manner. I will report the results of the project in a way that will not identify you. I plan to use the results for educational purposes and professional presentations outside of doctoral education.

You do not have to be in this study. If you don't want to, you can say no without losing any benefits that you are entitled to. If you do agree, you can stop participating at any time. If you wish to withdraw just tell me or the contact person listed below.

If you have questions about this research project please contact Dr. Karen Larwin, khlarwin@ysu.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this

research project, you may contact the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs at YSU (330-941-2377) or YSUIRB@ysu.edu.

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important.

Appendix E

Dental Hygiene Program Director's Survey

1. Which of the following educational settings describes where your dental hygiene program is located?
 - a. School of Allied Health Sciences
 - b. Dental School
 - c. Separate dental department
 - d. University or 4-year college
 - e. Community or junior college
 - f. Technical college
 - g. Other (please specify)

2. Indicate the type of degree granted at the completion of your dental hygiene program.
 - a. Diploma/certificate
 - b. Associate degree
 - c. Baccalaureate degree
 - d. Master's degree
 - e. Other (please specify)

3. How many applicants for your undergraduate program do you have in a typical year?
—

4. What is the typical number of students that graduate from your undergraduate program every year? _____

5. In a typical year, what is the average number of the following groups of students in your undergraduate class?
 - a. male students (_____)
 - b. socioeconomically disadvantaged students (_____)
 - c. African American students (_____)
 - d. American Indian students (_____)
 - e. Asian American students (_____)
 - f. European American students (_____)
 - g. Hispanic/Latina/o students (_____)

6. When you think about WHO is primarily responsible for recruiting students into your program, do you have a designated person to recruit students into your program?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Other (please specify)

7. If yes, what is this person’s professional background?

- a. Dental hygiene
- b. Other (please specify)

8. How many hours per week does this person spend on recruitment efforts? (_____)

9. For each item listed, on a scale from 1= “no priority at all” to 5= “highest priority”, how much of a priority is it for this person to recruit undergraduate dental hygiene students

a. With high ACT/SAT scores?	1	2	3	4	5
b. With high grade point averages?	1	2	3	4	5
c. With high involvement in community service?	1	2	3	4	5
d. With professional experiences in dental offices?	1	2	3	4	5
e. With a family background in the health professions?	1	2	3	4	5
f. From diverse backgrounds?	1	2	3	4	5
g. From underrepresented minority backgrounds?	1	2	3	4	5

10. Please share information about any other factors that this person might consider:

11. Which other persons in your program, such as students or faculty members, or which other persons outside of your program, such as advisors in high schools, are involved in recruitment efforts? Please list all other persons that are involved in recruitment efforts:

12. Think about the following ways programs might recruit students and tell us for each if you use this approach:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| a. Do you have a website targeted towards prospective students? | Yes | No |
| b. Do you have a Facebook page for prospective students? | Yes | No |
| c. Do you use twitter for prospective students? | Yes | No |
| c. Do you have written materials for prospective students? | Yes | No |

13. If you have written materials such as brochures, how many copies do you distribute in a given year?

14. And to whom do you distribute these materials?

15. Does your written material and/or your digital material focus specific efforts on recruiting students from underrepresented backgrounds?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. If yes, please describe

16. Do you or your recruiter visit high schools to recruit students?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. If yes, how many high school visits do you do in an average year?

17. How do you decide to which high schools to visit?

18. Do you participate in outreach events that other academic units organize?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Other (please specify)

19. Do you organize recruitment events inside your own school such as a campus visit day or an open house?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. If yes, how many events do you organize in an average year?

20. Are any of these recruitment events specifically designed to recruit students from underrepresented minority backgrounds into your program?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. If yes, please describe these events.

21. On a scale from 1= “not at all” to 5= “very important”, how important is it for your program to recruit

a. With high ACT/SAT scores?	1	2	3	4	5
b. With high grade point averages?	1	2	3	4	5
c. With high involvement in community service?	1	2	3	4	5
d. With professional experiences in dental offices?	1	2	3	4	5
e. With a family background in the health professions?	1	2	3	4	5
f. From diverse backgrounds?	1	2	3	4	5
g. From underrepresented minority backgrounds?	1	2	3	4	5
h. male students?					
i. socioeconomically disadvantaged students?	1	2	3	4	5

j. African American students?	1	2	3	4	5
k. American Indian students?	1	2	3	4	5
l. Asian American students?	1	2	3	4	5
m. European American students?	1	2	3	4	5
n. Hispanic/Latina/o students?	1	2	3	4	5
o. International students?	1	2	3	4	5

22. On a scale from 1= “not at all” to 5= “very satisfied”, how satisfied are you with your efforts concerning the recruitment of students:

a. With high ACT/SAT scores?	1	2	3	4	5
b. With high grade point averages?	1	2	3	4	5
c. With high involvement in community service?	1	2	3	4	5
d. With professional experiences in dental offices?	1	2	3	4	5
e. With a family background in the health professions?	1	2	3	4	5
f. From diverse backgrounds?	1	2	3	4	5
g. From underrepresented minority backgrounds?	1	2	3	4	5
h. male students?					
i. socioeconomically disadvantaged students?	1	2	3	4	5
j. African American students?	1	2	3	4	5
k. American Indian students ?	1	2	3	4	5
l. Asian American students?	1	2	3	4	5
m. European American students?	1	2	3	4	5
n. Hispanic/Latina/o students?	1	2	3	4	5
o. International students?	1	2	3	4	5

23. Do you have sufficient funds for recruitment efforts?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Other (please specify)

24. What would you say are your three biggest challenges concerning recruiting students into your program in general?

25. What would you say are your three biggest challenges concerning recruiting diverse students, such as from underrepresented minority backgrounds, or from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds into your program?

26. Please list other efforts you use to recruit students:

27. Which best practices for recruiting students into your program, in general, do you use?

28. Please share any other thoughts you may have concerning recruiting students into your program?

29. Which best practices for recruiting students from diverse backgrounds do you use?

End of Survey

Appendix F

Personal Interview Questions

1. What was your first recollection of when you decided to become a dental hygienist?
2. I would be interested in hearing more about what/who influenced you to choose dental hygiene.
3. I learned from surveying dental hygienists that a mentor can play a role in choosing a career and being successful. Tell me about your mentorship experience.
4. How did you make the decision to attend the college you did?
5. Tell me about your experience as a dental hygienist today.
6. When you talk to your colleagues about dental hygiene, how do their experiences compare to yours?
7. How has your experience as a dental hygienist influenced or not influenced you to encourage others to be a dental hygienist?

In 2013-2014 there were a total of 4.3% black dental hygiene students, 11.5% Hispanic dental hygiene students and .6% Indian dental hygiene students and 71.7 % White/Caucasian enrolled in the 334 accredited dental hygiene programs in the United States (American Dental Association, 2013).

8. What do these statistics mean to you about the profession of dental hygiene?
9. For most dental hygiene programs, the highest priority when recruiting students for dental hygiene are students that have a high ACT score and high grade point average. What role did academics play when you were accepted into a dental hygiene program?
10. Open house programs, brochures, recruitment specific personnel and campus tours are a few of the recruitment techniques used to attract students to dental hygiene programs. What do you think about the effectiveness of these techniques?

In August 2010, the Commission on Dental Accreditation revised its standards. Standard 1-4 states that the dental school must have policies and practices to:

1. *Achieve appropriate levels of diversity among its students, faculty, and staff*

2. *Engage in ongoing systemic and focused efforts to attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds*
3. *Systemically evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity. (Commission on Dental Accreditation, Accreditation Standards for Dental Education Programs, August 2010).*

11. Talk to me about the impact these initiatives will have on the number of minority dental hygiene students.
12. Thank you for all this valuable information, is there anything else you would like to add before we end?

Appendix G

Personal Interview Forms

Personal Interview Note Taking Form

This form will be used to record the proceedings of the personal interviews. Notes should be extensive and accurately reflect the content of the interview as well as any salient observations of nonverbal behavior, such as facial expressions, hand movements, etc. Interviews will also be tape recorded and transcribed.

Name of Individual being interviewed: _____

Date of Interview: _____ **Start Time:** _____

Location of Interview: _____ **End Time:** _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Appendix H

List of Ohio and Pennsylvania Dental Hygiene Programs

State	School	Director	e-mail address
Ohio	Shawnee State University	Nancy Bentley	nbentley@shawnee.edu
Ohio	James A. Rhodes State College	Denise Bowers	Bowers.d@rhodesstate.edu
Ohio	Ohio State University College of Dentistry	Michele Carr	Carr.3@osu.edu
Ohio	Columbus State Community College	Connie Clark	Cclark02@csc.edu
Ohio	Cuyahoga Community College Metropolitan Campus	Mary Lou Gerosky	Mary-Lou.Gerosky@tri-c.edu
Ohio	Youngstown State University	Suzanne Smith	Smsmith05@ysu.edu
Ohio	Lorain County Community College	Sue Leiken	sleiken@lorainccc.edu
Ohio	Lakeland Community College	Jennifer Barr	jbarr@lakelandcc.edu
Ohio	University of Cincinnati	Cyndee Stegeman	stegemc@ucmail.uc.edu
Ohio	Sinclair	Sue Raffee	Sue.raffee@sinclair.edu
Ohio	Owens Community College	Beth Tronolone	Elizabeth_tronolone@owens.edu
Ohio	Stark State College	Dean Mallernee	dmallernee@starkstate.edu
Pennsylvania	Community College of Philadelphia	Theresa Grady	tgrady@ccp.edu
Pennsylvania	Fortis Institute-Erie	Patricia Inks	pinks@tsbi.edu
Pennsylvania	Fortis Institute-Scranton	Laura Sleeper	LSleeper@FortisInstitute.edu
Pennsylvania	Harcum College	Jean-Byrnes-Ziegler	Jbyrnes-ziegler@harcum.edu
Pennsylvania	Harrisburg Area Community College	Donna Traaen	dmtraaen@hacc.edu
Pennsylvania	Luzerne County Community College	Catherine Brown	cbrown@luzerne.edu
Pennsylvania	Manor College	Virginia Saunders	Dental@manor.edu
Pennsylvania	Montgomery County	Jenny	jsheaffe@mc3.edu

	Community College	Sheaffer	
Pennsylvania	Northampton Community College	Sherri Myers	smeyers@northampton.edu
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania College of Technology	Shawn Kiser	skiser@pct.edu
Pennsylvania	University of Pittsburgh	Angelina Riccelli	riccelli@pitt.edu
Pennsylvania	Westmoreland County Community College	Angela Rinchuse	rinchusea@wccc-pa.edu

Appendix I

List of Tables for Dental Hygienist Survey

Table 1. *Survey Participants by Total Number of Respondents, Frequency and Percentage*

Participants	<i>Surveyed</i>	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>
Directors	24	9	37.5%
Dental Hygienists	1,289	288	22.34%

Table 2. *Gender*

Gender	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Female	281	98.60%
Male	4	1.43%
Chose not to answer	3	

Table 3. *Ethnicity*

Ethnicity	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Caucasian/White	271	95.42%
Hispanic/Latino	7	2.46%
African American/Black	3	1.06%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	0.35%
Native American	0	0%
Other	2	0.70%
Chose not to answer	4	

Table 4. *State of Residence*

State	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Ohio	147	51.76%
Pennsylvania	135	47.54%
Other	2	0.70%

Table 5. *Type of Dental Hygiene Program Attended*

Program	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Two-year	235	84.22%
Four-year	39	13.9%
Other	5	1.7%

Table 6. *Level of Education*

Education	<i>f</i>	%
Bachelor degree	93	33.21%
Associate degree	90	32.14%
Master degree	78	27.86%
Certificate	8	2.86%
Doctoral degree	7	2.50%
Other	4	1.44%
Chose not to answer	8	

Table 7. *URM Responses to What Interested Them in the Field of Dental Hygiene*

Reasons for interest in the field	<i>f</i>	%
Mentor guided	3	25.00%
Friend recommended	2	16.67%
Career day seminar	1	8.33%
Internet search	1	8.33%
Family referral	0	
Recruited	0	
Other*	4	40%

*Other responses included personal interest, experience as a dental assistant and high school programs.

Table 8. *Non-URM Responses to What Interested Them in The Field of Dental Hygiene*

Reasons for interest in the field	<i>f</i>	%
Family referral	46	17.42%
Friend recommended	41	15.53%
Mentor guided	40	15.15%
Internet search	13	4.92%
Career day seminar	10	3.79%
Recruited	3	1.14%
Other*	111	42.05%

*Other responses included personal interest, experience as a dental assistant and exposure to the dental profession.

Table 9. *Motivation for URM Respondent Entering the Dental Hygiene Profession*

URM Responses to motivators	SA	A	U	D	SD	Weighted
Academically prepared for the	18.18%	54.55%	18.18%	9.09%	0.00%	2.18

program of study							
Independence	41.67%	33.33%	16.67%	8.33%	0.00%	1.92	
Job availability	50.00%	33.33%	8.33%	8.33%	0.00%	1.75	
Service	27.27%	72.73%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.75	
Income	41.67%	50.00%	8.33%	0.00%	0.00%	1.67	
Flexibility	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.50	

Table 10. *Motivation for Non-URM Respondent Entering the Dental Hygiene Profession*

Non-URM Responses to motivators	SA	A	U	D	SD	Weighted
Academically prepared for the program of study	31.13%	37.74%	21.01%	7.00%	3.11%	2.13
Income	34.10%	47.51%	5.75%	8.81%	3.83%	2.01
Job availability	39.16%	37.64%	11.03%	9.13%	3.04%	1.99
Independence	37.16%	38.31%	15.33%	7.28%	1.92%	1.98
Service	38.37%	40.70%	15.89%	3.49%	1.55%	1.89
Flexibility	53.64%	35.25%	7.28%	3.07%	.77%	1.62

Table 11. *Primary Motivator for Career Selection (URM Responses)*

Motivation	<i>f</i>	%
Income	5	41.67%
Service	3	25.00%
Independence	2	16.67%
Flexibility	1	8.33%
Job availability	1	8.33%
Other	0	0.00%

Table 12. *Primary Motivator for Career Selection (Non-URM Responses)*

Motivation	<i>f</i>	%
Flexibility	62	23.57%
Income	60	22.81%
Other	46	17.49%
Service	43	16.35%
Job availability	26	9.89%
Independence	26	9.89%

Table 13. *URM Personal Experiences for Choosing a Career in Dental Hygiene*

Personal Experience Themes	<i>f</i>	%
Influenced by a dental professional	4	40.00%

Prior dental assistant	4	40.00%
Pay	1	10.00%
High school careers' program	1	10.00%

Table 14. *Non-URM Personal Experiences for Choosing a Career in Dental Hygiene*

Personal Experience Themes	<i>f</i>	%
Influenced by a dental professional	68	28.84%
Prior dental assistant	52	22.13%
Flexibility	30	12.71%
Health care oriented	26	11.02%
Positive dental experience	20	8.47%
Other	13	5.51%
Pay	8	3.39%
High school careers' program	6	2.54%

Table 15. *URM Responses to Having a Mentor*

Mentor	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	3	25%
No	9	80%

Table 16. *Non-URM Responses to Having a Mentor*

Mentor	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	56	21.21%
No	207	78.41%

Table 17. *URM Responses to Recruiting Minority Students*

Suggestions	<i>f</i>	%
Increase Career Awareness	2	33.33%
Visit High Schools	2	33.33%

Table 18. *Non-URM Responses to Recruiting Minority Students*

Suggestions	<i>f</i>	%
Visit High Schools	33	18.13%
Increase Career Awareness	12	6.56%

Additional Data Analysis of combined URM and non-URM responses to questions on survey not included in Chapter 4.

Type of Employment Setting

Work Environment	<i>f</i>	%
Private practice (dental office)	180	64.29%
Community college	46	16.43%
Public health (correctional facilities, USN, USAF)	21	7.50%
Public university, not in a dental school or college	15	5.36%
Corporate (sales, insurance, administration)	11	3.93%
Public college or school of dentistry	10	3.57%
Private technical institute, technical college, or career institute	7	2.50%
Private college or school of dentistry	5	1.79%
Public technical institute, technical college, or career institute	3	1.07%
Private university, not in a dental school or college	2	0.71%
Other	55	20.36%
Chose not to answer	8	

State Licensure

More than one	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	68	24.37%
No	211	75.63%
Chose not to answer	9	

Did you take courses or obtain any education prior to entering the dental hygiene program?

Courses or Education	<i>f</i>	%
Prerequisites	115	41.52%
None of the above	76	27.64
Was enrolled in another major and switched to dental hygiene	47	17.09
Other	31	11.37
Bachelor degree	23	8.36
Associate degree	11	4.00
Non-credit classes	5	1.82

In Dental Hygiene School, were you the recipient of:

Services	Yes		No		Total
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
Tutoring	38	15.70%	206	84.30%	244
Mentoring	103	42.21%	143	57.79%	246
Faculty Advising	171	66.15%	88	33.85%	259
Leadership Training	44	18.72%	193	81.82%	237
Financial Scholarship	93	36.61 %	163c	63.39%	256

Years Practicing

Years in Practice	<i>f</i>	%
Less than 1	9	3.20%
1-5	44	15.66%
6-10	23	8.19%
11-15	30	10.86%
16-20	16	5.69%
21-25	23	8.19%
26-30	25	8.90%
31-35	39	13.88%
36-40	39	13.88%
Over 40	33	11.74%
Chose not to answer	7	

Did you apply to other health professions programs when you applied to dental hygiene?

	<i>f</i>	%
More than one		
Yes	17	6.25%
No	250	91.91%
Chose not to answer	5	1.84%

Dental program graduated from

Schools in Ohio and Pennsylvania	<i>f</i>	%
Fortis	1	.36%
Manor	1	.36%
Columbus State	2	.73%
Community College of Philadelphia	2	.73%
Luzerne	2	.73%
Harcum College	3	1.09%
Lorain	3	1.09%
Stark	3	1.09%
Westmoreland Co. Community College	3	1.09%
University of Pennsylvania	5	1.82%
Owens	6	2.18%
Harrisburg Community College	7	2.55%
Sinclair	7	2.55%
Rhodes State College	8	2.91%
Northampton Community College	9	3.27%
Pennsylvania College of Technology	9	3.27%
Lakeland	10	3.64%

Raymond Walters/Blue Ash	10	3.64%
Montgomery County	12	4.36%
Shawnee	4	4.45%
Cuyahoga Community College	19	6.91%
The Ohio State University	23	8.36%
Youngstown State University	26	9.45%
University of Pittsburgh	28	10.18%
Other	72	26.18

What do you think would encourage more individuals to follow your career path?

Themes	<i>f</i>	%
More job opportunities	52	22.03%
Greater awareness about the profession	31	13.14%
More Flexibility	26	11.02

Do you think there are a disproportionate number of minority dental hygienists within the profession in comparison to the population served?

	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	118	44.19%
No	103	38.58%
Other	46	17.23%

If you responded “yes” in the previous question (#20), please comment on Why you think there are a disproportionate number of minority dental hygienists within the profession in comparison to the population served?

Themes	<i>f</i>	%
Don't know	53	46.09%
Academically unprepared	9.57	9.57%
Lack of exposure to the field of dentistry	10	8.70%

What role do you think professional organizations (such as American Dental Hygienists' Association, Ohio Dental Hygienists' Association or Pennsylvania Dental Hygienists' Association) have (if any) in mentoring minority dental hygiene students for recruitment and retention in allied health programs?

Themes	<i>f</i>	%
Don't Know	73	35.61%
Mentor	30	14.63%
Go to High Schools	28	13.66%

Market the profession 17 8.29%

Have you had any experience with diversity initiatives (student learning communities, remediation programs, and high school recruitment via career days) that would help to recruit and retain more minority dental hygiene students? Please explain

Themes	<i>f</i>	%
No	173	80.84%
Yes	39	18.22%
Career days	13	6.07%
High school visits	11	5.14%

What impact do you speculate those recruitment and retention techniques will have (if any) on the number of minority dental hygiene students within dental hygiene programs of study?

Themes	<i>f</i>	%
Increase minority enrollment	78	48.45%
No impact on minority enrollment	19	11.80%
Unsure	64	39.75%

Appendix J

Results for Dental Hygiene Program Director's Survey

Q1. Which of the following educational settings describes where your dental hygiene program is located?

Educational Setting	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
University or 4-Year College	3	33.33%
Community or Junior College	3	33.33%
School of Allied Health	1	11.11%
Dental School	1	11.11%
Technical College	1	11.11%
Separate Dental Dept.	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%

Q2. Indicate the type of degree granted at the completion of your dental hygiene program.

Degree granted	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Diploma/Certificate	0	0.00%
Associate degree	6	66.67%
Baccalaureate degree	2	22.22%
Master degree	0	0.00%
Other	1	11.11%

Q3. How many applicants for your undergraduate dental hygiene program do you average in a typical year?

Reponses	#
	200
	150
	70
	65
	50
	50
	40
	27

Q4. *What is the typical number of students that graduate from your undergraduate program every year?*

Students	#
	35
	32
	30
	26
	25
	20
	18
	11

Q5. *In a typical year, what is the average number of the following groups of students in your undergraduate class?*

Students	#
Male Students	7
Socioeconomically disadvantaged	4
African American	7
American Indian	6
Asian American	6
European American	6
Hispanic /Latino	6
Chose not to answer	2

Q6. *When you think about WHO is primarily responsible for recruiting students into your program, do you have a designated person to recruit students into your program?*

Recruiter	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	4	57.14%
No	3	42.86%
Other	0	0.00%
Chose not to answer	2	

Q7. *If yes, what is this person's professional background?*

Participants	<i>f</i>	%
Dental Hygiene	2	50.00%
Other	2	50.00%
Chose not to answer	5	

Q8. How many hours per week does this person spend on recruitment efforts?

Hours	#
3-4	1
1	1
20	1
2	1
Skipped	5

Q9. For each item listed, on a scale from 1= “no priority at all” to 5= “highest priority”, how much of a priority is it for this person to recruit undergraduate dental hygiene students

	1 (No priority at all)	2	3	4	5 (Highest Priority)	Total	Weighted Average
With high ACT/SAT scores?	66.67%	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	16.67%	6	2.17
With high grade point averages?	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	33.33%	50.00%	6	4.33
With high involvement in community service	83.33%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	6	1.17
With professional experiences in dental offices?	83.33%	0.00%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	6	1.33
With family background in the health professions?	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	6	1.00
From diverse backgrounds?	66.67%	16.67%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	6	1.50
From underrepresented minority backgrounds?	66.67%	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	6	1.67

Q10. Please share information about any other factors that this person might consider:

Reponses

- Grades in pre-req courses, particularly science-based courses
 - Observation in field of interest
 - Science GPA responses to an essay
-

Q11. Which other persons in your program, such as students or faculty members, or which other persons outside of your program, such as advisors in high schools, are involved in recruitment efforts? Please list all other persons that are involved in recruitment efforts:

Reponses

- Program director
 - Admissions
 - Faculty
 - High School advisors
 - Dental Hygiene faculty
 - All dental hygiene faculty members & students
 - Office of admissions visits schools/programs for recruitment for the college
-

Q12. Think about the following ways programs might recruit students and tell us for each if you use this approach:

Q13. If you have written materials such as brochures, how many copies do you distribute in a given year?

Reponses

- 100
 - Typically, electronic communication
 - 300
 - 50
 - Hundreds of information sessions geared toward dental hygiene
 - Unknown
 - 50
-

Q14. And to whom do you distribute these materials?

Themes	<i>f</i>	%
--------	----------	---

Prospective students	6	85.71%
High Schools	1	14.28%

Q15. *Do written recruitment material and/or your digital material focus specific efforts on recruitment students from underrepresented backgrounds?*

Participants	f	%
Yes	0	0.00%
No	7	100%
Skipped	2	

Q16. *Do you or your recruiter personally visit high schools to recruit students?*

Participants	f	%
Yes	4	44%
No	3	33%
Skipped	2	22%

Q17. *How do you decide to which high schools to visit?*

Reponses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The admissions dept. has a rolling visitation schedule and a dedicated rep for HS • Varies • Those within a specified area • No

Q18. *Do you participate in outreach events that other academic units organize?*

Participants	f	Response Rate
Yes	7	100%
No		
Skipped	2	

Q19. *Do you organize recruitment events such as a campus visit day or an open house?*

Participants	f	Response Rate
Yes	6	85.71%
No	1	14.29
Skipped	2	

Q 20. *Are any of these recruitment events specifically designed to recruit students from underrepresented minority backgrounds into your program?*

Participants	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	2	28.57%
No	5	71.43%
Skipped	2	

Q 21. *On a scale from 1= “not at all” to 5= “very important”, how important is it for your program to recruit*

	1 (No priority at all)	2	3	4	5 (Highest Priority)	Total	Weighted Average
With high ACT/SAT scores?	42.86%	0.00%	14.29%	14.29	28.57%	7	2.86
With high grade point averages?	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	42.86	57.14%	7	4.57
With high involvement in community service	28.57%	14.29%	42.86%	14.29	0.00%	7	2.43
With professional experiences in dental offices?	57.14%	0.00%	28.57%	0.00	14.29%	7	2.14
European American Students	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00	0.00%	7	1.00
Hispanic/Latino Students	14.89%	28.57%	42.86%	14.29	0.00%	7	2.71
International Students	14.29%	28.57%	28.57%	57.28	0.00%	7	2.71

Q 22. On a scale from 1= “not at all” to 5= “very satisfied”, how satisfied are you with your efforts concerning the recruitment of students:

	1 (No priority at all)	2	3	4	5 (Highest Priority)	Total	Weighted Average
With high ACT/SAT scores?	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	42.86%	42.86%	7	4.29
With high grade point averages?	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	42.86%	42.86%	7	4.29
With high involvement in community service	0.00%	14.29%	42.86%	28.57%	28.57%	7	3.43
With professional experiences in dental offices?	14.29%	0.00%	28.57%	28.57%	28.57%	7	3.57
With a family background in health professions?	42.86%	0.00%	28.57%	14.29%	14.29%	7	2.57
From diverse backgrounds?	14.29%	28.57%	42.86%	14.29%	0.00%	7	2.57
From underrepresented minority backgrounds?	14.29%	28.57%	42.86%	14.29%	0.00%	7	2.57
Male students?	14.29%	28.57%	42.86%	14.29%	0.00%	7	2.57
Socioeconomically disadvantaged students?	0.00%	28.57%	57.14%	14.29%	0.00%	7	2.86
African American	14.29%	28.57%	42.89%	14.29%	0.00%	7	2.57

Students?							
American Indian Students	14.29%	28.57%	42.86%	14.29%	0.00%	7	2.57
Asian American students?	14.29%	28.57%	42.86%	14.29%	0.00%	7	2.57
European American Students?	14.29%	14.29%	42.86%	28.57%	0.00%	7	2.86
Hispanic/Latino Students?	14.29%	28.57%	42.86%	14.29%	0.00%	7	2.57
International Students?	14.29%	28.57%	28.57%	28.57%	0.00%	7	2.71

Q 23. *Do you have sufficient funds for recruitment efforts?*

Participants	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	3	42.86%
No	4	57.14%
Skipped	2	

Q 24. *What would you say are your three biggest challenges concerning recruiting students into your program in general?*

Themes	<i>f</i>	%
Lack of time	4	57.14%
Finding qualified applicants	3	42.86%
Lack of resources	3	42.86%

Q 25. *What would you say are your three biggest challenges concerning recruiting diverse students, such as from underrepresented minority backgrounds or from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds into your program?*

Themes	<i>f</i>	%
Underqualified	2	28.57%
Not a diverse community (rural)	2	28.57%
Lack of scholarships	1	14.29%
Lack of resources	1	14.29%
Lack of minority mentors	1	14.29%

Q 26. *Please list other efforts you use to recruit students.*

Reponses

- Word of mouth from employers of our students.
 - Support of past graduates in the community
-

Q 27. *Which best practices for recruiting students into your program, in general, do you use?*

Reponses

- Open house programs and community relations
 - I work directly with Admissions. They recruit, I help to inform the student as to exactly what they are responsible for and the intensity of DH school
 - Brochures & Open House
 - The recent hiring of a recruitment specific personnel for Health Sciences program
 - Dental Hygiene Information Sessions and advisor from the dental hygiene program
 - One-on-one tours/campus visits. Good communication (returning phone calls, e-mail, etc. promptly) interactive recruitment events.
-

Q 28. *Please share any other thoughts you may have concerning recruiting students into your program?*

Reponses

- There need to be more efforts on education the public on the role of the dental hygiene professional and organized efforts to recruit minority populations (including males) to the profession.
-

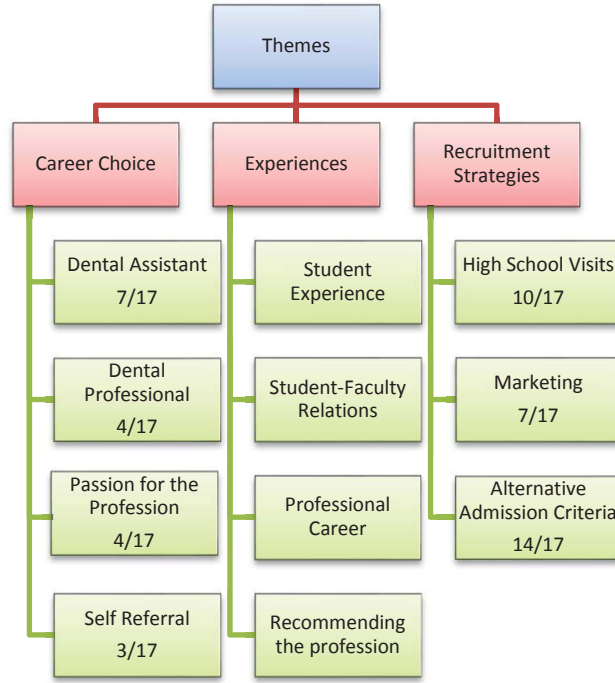
Q 29. *Which best practices for recruiting students into your program in general do you use?*

Reponses

- Health career days
 - Only university specific efforts
-

Appendix K

List of Figures



Appendix L

Interview Transcripts

Transcript #1

Ok so we're going to record the interview – let's start with the first question: if you can think back what was your first recollection when you decided to be a dental hygienist

When I decided to be a dental hygienist I was actually in the assisting dental system and I decided that I wanted to further my career because I really enjoyed being with patients and dentistry was something I just really liked. So I knew dental hygiene had more to offer you know as far as income and ah just you know career growth

Um hmm

So that's what I remember

Can you tell me was there a particular person you worked with or someone in your family that influenced you that said

Um I think that working in the office I worked in I was around a couple hygienist there and I saw that they enjoyed their work and that they you know and did a little better than me as far as living and so that kinda influenced me – and also the dentist I worked for – he was a good role model you know to me so

Can you talk a little more about how you got into dental assisting?

Actually I wasn't interested in it at all I actually needed a position a job – I moved to Indiana and I didn't have any work so um the church that I went to -this lady introduced me to a dentist and he said he was hiring and I kinda was introduced to dentistry as a child because my aunt work in the dental office for like ever – she still actually works for a dental office and so I was around that environment a lot so when I was introduced to dental assisting in Indiana I kinda you know I was interested in it cause I was in that environment. So those are a couple different areas

Um I learned from talking to other hygienists that a mentor played a big role in helping them to get into the profession can you speak to all about that?

Um like I said the dentist that I did work for he was really like a role model person, he really didn't encourage me to go to hygiene school, me, myself I think I had it in me that I wanted to do more than just assisting and um maybe go into dentistry after hygiene that was in the back of my mind but the dentist I worked for he was my role model um he took us to a lot of different continuing education programs and introduced us to a lot of

new technology like cosmetic dentist and all that really interests me so just as an assistant I thought that was more of a dead end job so I thought dental hygiene was more where I could grow more in the profession

Ok and then how did you make the decision to attend the college you did?

Actually I went to Youngstown State prior to being a dental assistant and was involved in – I was enrolled in a different major – I was enrolled in communications I chose YSU cause that's where I relocated back to Youngstown, Ohio and I had a lot of my prerequisites already taken so I just applied to the program and actually got accepted the first time I applied. So I was very fortunate and then I did hear good things about YSU cause I decided to do a little bit of research about other colleges or community colleges in the area that offered dental hygiene and it just seemed that YSU was just the best around

Can you talk about your experience when you were here?

At the dental hygiene program?

Um hmm

At first I thought it was gonna be really hard – difficult – challenging – because I heard horror stories from a lot of people but once I got to the program I felt that my dental assisting background really helped me a lot as far as being prepared um for certain things like my anatomy course and dental materials- you know I was a lot – it was easier for me to get through those courses because I had the background experience and I really enjoyed the program – I liked the professors – I think they did a really good job teaching and I learned a lot from the program

Alright can you tell me a little bit about your experience as a dental hygienist today?

As a dental hygienist - I've been in dental hygienist for 11 years I've actually been working for the same office and I was able to have other roles – other than dental hygienist in the corporation that I work for so I was introduced to management and was able to see the other side of dentistry and how they – the business side basically and um now I'm able to help out at the office more on that end and I still do practice as a clinician in the office and teach – well not teach – [REDACTED] so that's exciting

Would you say your career is what you thought it would be?

That and more – because when I started the dental hygiene program I never even thought I would do anything different you know I just always thought it would be cleaning teeth it's nice

What kind of challenges have you faced as a dental hygienist?

Challenges I would say the office I work in is very fast paced – and I guess just getting the right proper patient care to every patient – sometimes I'm forced to see a patient in a

certain amount of time and that just frustrates me – I really don't have many challenges – I know that other people do cause they might not be able to find full time work – but I've been very fortunate that my office is a full time office – so I really don't have any challenges

So when you talk to colleagues or friends how do their experiences as dental hygienists compare to yours?

I talked to a girl that I work with – she feels- she- I don't quite know how to answer that question I guess – well I guess I could say that for the most part most of the hygienists I talk to on a regular basis just do dental hygiene so with me – I do a little bit more – I'm involved in more like ADHA ADOA- um I am at the University and you know I do a lot of other things than they do so but I think that's good – it sets a good example – I think a lot of the people I talk to – like the one girl I work with wants to be more involved now because she sees me doing those types of things but basically I want to do more and be involved in more but other people I talk to just want to clock in and clock out - do their job and that's it

Has your experience as dental hygienist influenced you or not influenced you to encourage other people to become a dental hygienist?

It's encourage – yeah – I think I would influence others – to become a dental hygienist because I know that there's a lot of benefits from being in the profession but you don't just necessarily have to be in an office setting you can have other career opportunities other than just being a dental hygienist

So that's what you would share with them? That there's a lot of options?

Exactly. Right cause a lot of people when I talk to them they're like well what else can I do if I don't want to do it anymore? So I think it's great that YSU has a bachelor's program now and I think that helps open you know other opportunities

One thing I wanted to share with you were these statistics um in 2012 and 2013 there were a total of 4.3% Black dental hygiene students, 11.5% Hispanic dental hygiene students, .6% Indian and 71.7% White Caucasian students enrolled in the 334 credited dental hygiene programs -what do these statistics mean to you about the profession of dental hygiene

Well – I - that's shocking – I'm – mean – I feel that maybe you know maybe we need to get out into the communities and maybe they're not educated the minorities you know educated about the profession and that's why they don't choose to become a dental hygienist or seek- want information about the program – I think that a lot of people don't know and especially from experience with my patients Black dental – not dental hygienists -Black African American individuals I work with a lot of those in my office and a lot of them are uneducated as to the difference between what is a dental assistant and a dental hygienist – I'm not saying Caucasians or another race doesn't have that

confusion but I see it more in the minorities and I'll educate them and I'll tell them the difference and I think it's just lack of knowledge unawareness.

Yeah.

And also I don't know what the statistics are as far as how many Caucasians are enrolled in college and how many Blacks and I don't know if that has anything to do with it either but um

For most dental hygiene programs, the highest priority when recruiting students for our programs is the high grade point average or high ACT scores or high SAT scores – what role did academics play when you were accepted into dental hygiene?

I recall that I had a lot of my prerequisites were taken already so I think that that was looked at; I had dental assisting experience – I think that was probably taken into consideration my GPA wasn't that bad – I think it was average – good enough to get into the program but I do think that being a minority I think that had something to do with being accepted too because I'm sure the program would like to see more minorities

Yeah- do you think there's any other qualities that should be considered when choosing dental hygiene students beside the academics?

Um academics I think matters I think that that should be looked at primarily and perhaps I don't know if interviews are done now but just someone's motivation or however they're – if they're motivated if they learn if they wanna do good for themselves just someone who has a passion for dentistry maybe they have – they're a dental assistant and they wanna be a dental hygienist I think that should be taken into consideration and I think to a certain point some minorities need to be considered but I also think they should also meet those academic requirements

So – open house programs, brochures, recruitment, personnel, campus tours, these are just some of the ways we've used to recruit students in the past – what do you think of the effectiveness of these techniques?

As far as for minorities?

Um hmm

I think that those are good techniques however, I think that some of those like open house or whatever it is people have to want to go to them – they have to attend – so actually getting the word out to people who have no choice but to attend like going into high schools in the inner city where there's a lot of minorities and speaking about the profession maybe having a minority go and speak and tell them their story and get the word out I think that would really encourage more people to apply to the program

Are you thinking like alumni or representatives from the university that are minorities going into those schools?

I would say a minority from the university but I would also- I mean I know there's not many minority dental hygienists – so I would think maybe someone from the university maybe along with a minority hygienist maybe speaking together since the hygienist knows what the profession is all about they can kinda get the insight on the career and then maybe just a minority from the university to back them up.

Alright. Do you remember taking part in any recruitment events?

I don't

Ok. Ok

One more question in August of 2010 the Commission on Dental Accreditation and I have this written out as well they revised their standards – now this is for dental school – so for them to become accredited they have to show that they achieve appropriate levels of diversity among students, faculty and staff. They also have to engage in ongoing focused efforts to attract and retain students from diverse backgrounds and they have to evaluate strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity. Um, talk to me about how you would feel about mandating policies to increase diversity because this is really a mandate for dental schools but dental hygiene doesn't have anything like that. So how would you feel about something like that and what impact would these initiatives have on the number of minority dental hygiene students?

I think you know setting a standard like this would definitely have a huge impact on recruiting minorities to apply to the dental hygiene program and I think it's important to have a balance you know -

Basically for what reason?

I think that every profession should have a balance – a diversity – it should be diverse - every profession should have a diverse type of individual just because they're working with the public – and I don't know how I really feel about that -I think it's fair

That's a good reason for feeling the way you do

I just want to thank you for all this valuable information and if there's anything else you want to add to any of the questions I asked you or the topic in general?

No. I think I'm good.

Ok.

Transcript #2

Ok so we're going to record this interview and we'll get started here. Ok so our first question is what was your like very first recollection when you decided to become a dental hygienist?

My first recollection as to why I decided?

Um hmm

I wanted to do something in health professions and I knew I didn't want to be nursing so just as process of elimination I went through the programs – I was at YSU – I had taken some allied health prerequisites and those were required so I was between respiratory therapy and dental hygiene so I was choosing dental hygiene when I was I was shadowing a hygienist

Hm, tell me more about that shadowing experience

We first the first dental hygienist I ever shadowed was actually an orthodontist so just to see if I could get in the field and then from there I went more – I distinguished – because I'm guilty of not really knowing the difference between a dental hygienist and a dental assistant- I mean I kinda did – but not until I was at the orthodontist's and I'm like oh there's no hygienist here – and then I realized it was separate things – so from there I saw a dental hygienist and it was one from my office – um it just seems like I'm a people person – seemed like a pleasant profession –

Was there like a person or someone who first introduced you to the field of dentistry – or is it just from going –

No, it was just from going I really don't know any other hygienists and everyone I know through dental hygiene now are people I've met through the school and process –

Um hm. Ok I learned from surveying other dental hygienists that a mentor played a big role in either helping them choose their career in dental hygiene or their being successful through school um can you talk at all about that? And whether you had a mentorship?

I definitely did I would say some of the first – you know I've been in college for a while so by the time I would have gotten to dental hygiene school I would have been in school for almost 4 years already- in college – about 3-4 years and up until then I can't say I ever had a mentor through the college program but through being in dental hygiene school I'd say I've met a few mentors through you know teachers and whatnot and they definitely played a role as to how I utilized my dental hygiene degree – my career and whatnot

Do you still think you would be where you are today without the role of a mentor?

Absolutely not. I wouldn't have because going back to why I chose to be a hygienist it was because I just knew I wanted to do something health related – I became passionate about it as I went through obviously or I wouldn't be here- I would not have finished – and it was kind of a shot in the dark – where I started in it – you know I wasn't one of those people or I didn't wanna be – I didn't wake up when I was 2 and say oh I wanna be a hygienist it was just like more that I needed a career and health professions helped me try this and it ended up it worked out and I fell I love with it – I developed a passion for it but I think a part of me developing that passion was I was mentored by those people who carried that same sort of passion and they kinda guided me through so I wouldn't feel about it if it wasn't for them.

And then how did you make your decision to attend YSU?

I'm from the area so it was more I had to stay local – and I really didn't love anywhere else – so it was more so I found dental hygiene cause I attended YSU

And did you sort of seek it out? I mean like through the website – like how did you know YSU had dental hygiene?

I did – I looked through the website – like I went through the Colleges of Health and Human Services to see what professions were offered cause everyone knows nursing and stuff but I wanted something a little more narrow- so I did come across it through my own research.

Alright and then tell me about your experience as a dental hygienist today

Today? Well I utilized my degree a little differently – when I first graduated about 3 years ago – I practiced clinically for about 6 months when I first obtained my license – but then I continued my education – I went into a graduate program so while I was doing that graduate program I was mentored more through the educational side -dental hygiene education -I did that simultaneously while I'd been working on my graduate degree – so I don't practice clinically in private practice as much anymore besides as temping just because I – you know – I guess it goes back to the mentorship – I found a passion for using it a different way

So would you say your career-is it what you thought it would be or is it different?

No, because you go in well at least when I went in – you start thinking you're gonna do 8-4 practice Monday through Friday and that's not the case – but definitely a change for the better – I found what I like

Um hmm – can you talk about any of the challenges you face in your career?

Definitely -at least in this area- I think employment – I think it's hard to find and that's part of the reason why I don't practice clinically these days because it's hard to find with my schedule the openings are few and far between -there's not a really great amount of

job opportunities cause most hygienists are employed part time and only certain days for certain hours and there's not much flexibility

Right

So if you don't have a schedule that allows for much flexibility if you're not open all the time – then that makes it a little more difficult so that's been a challenge as to why – cause I would like to practice more clinically it's just I don't have the ability to be as flexible and open all the time so that limits my – ability to do that so that's definitely challenging- I'm sure other hygienists have that same problem – at least in that area

Well when you talk to some of your colleagues about dental hygiene how do their experiences compare to yours?

Most um people they do work for a private practice – I'm definitely in the minority in that I do the education aspect – a lot of them – there's a couple that have a steady full time job but they're definitely few and far between -the majority of the people I talk to – colleagues- work about 2 even 3-part time jobs throughout the week so they'll work 2 days in one office 2 days in another maybe have a day off or maybe even pick up another day if they're off so that seems to be – there's always a lot of frustration when they were first starting out so even just to get to build a schedule like that to get all the dentists on the same page or be able to find a dentist if they're only free Wednesdays so we know we'll only let them work on Wednesdays so I think that's the trouble they face and sometimes it ends up where they just stick it out – you do it long enough and it falls into place -you build up a reputation but then sometimes it'll be a year or two and you'll still find people struggling and they almost give up

Right but it sounds like most of your classmates are doing that – are in private practice –

Yes

Um one thing I wanted to show you or let me ask you one more question about that – how has your experience as a hygienist encouraged you or not to encourage others to be a dental hygienist?

I encourage people who want to like be in health professions for the reasons I see – and I think it's true for all health professions but dental hygienists especially if you like to educate or you're the preventive educator you're the specialist – so if you like to help people -if you wanna go out there and - cause I think it's in general like it's all about like you want to develop a relationship with patients – if you're good with people -like sometimes they'll think of their dental hygienists and think like oh – they know more about me than – they're like your friend – so whoever wants to go into health professions and they're all about being a people person and they're into helping people and educating then I will push them in that direction – what discourages me – sometimes I just hate to push people and it could just be – I don't know – I just haven't really looked at in other

areas but the job opportunities around here in Youngstown – I'm more hesitant to push them cause if they think you're gonna go in and it's not – if you're a nurse you can graduate -there's 10 full time jobs or more lined up – your choice but for this it's more like you're gonna have to get out there and have to work – it takes a little bit of time to find exactly what you want for the most part- for that reason – I tend to be more upfront about that

Yeah – that's very true. Um a couple statistics I wanted to share with you – in 2013 there was a total of 4.3% Black, 11.5% Hispanic, .6% Indian, and 71.7% White/Caucasian dental hygienist students that were enrolled in the 334 credited dental hygiene programs in the US – what do those statistics mean to you about the profession of dental hygiene?

Clearly there's just an astoundingly low number of minorities there – but then when you think about it it's not shocking cause there's – you think of a hygienist you think of a Caucasian White female

Tell me more about that and why do you think that?

Really because it's true – I mean maybe because it's how it's portrayed that way – the way I would say if you look in any – at least in any commercials – I think for one thing dental hygienists are always portrayed as females so

I think it's around 4% that are males –

Right so that's another whole minority thing in itself – so if you're always thinking women – if you think of any commercials on TV -maybe it's just personal experience that's where my personal experience growing up I always had a White Caucasian female hygienist and if I go back I couldn't think of any time I would have had an obvious minority – and that's just based on personal experience and I guess my other personal experience would be going through dental hygiene school and there was myself and I guess an African American girl but even with that it's just – you're looking at smaller – you're looking at dental hygiene classes – between 20, 24 students and most girls so you usually only have 1 -2 minorities

For most dental hygiene programs, the highest priority for recruiting and retaining students we look at GPAs, or SATs or ACT scores -um what role did academics play with when you were accepted into the dental hygiene program

It was based on GPA so there was core classes there was prerequisite classes that you had to take in order to apply for the program – then once you took those – those grades from those classes were weighted – the heaviest in accordance with your overall GPA

How do you feel about that? Using that as the criteria for accepting students?

I never questioned it before – I think it works especially when you're looking for the rigid structure of a dental hygiene curriculum obviously academics are important you would need that certain amount of education in order to make it through the program

Do you think there are any other qualities in a person that should be considered beside just academics?

Yes and no. I think academics just stands out because if you don't have the cognitive ability to get through the program that's a problem in itself but I mean there's definitely other characteristics cause obviously if it's a health profession you're working with other people – you can be the brightest person in the world but if you can't communicate appropriately – if you're educated as a hygienist though and I guess I'm trying to say personality maybe?

Um

Important as well?

Um hmm. Um open house programs brochures recruitment personnel campus tours – these are all different recruitment techniques that are used to attract students to dental hygiene programs. What do you think of the effectiveness of these techniques to recruit students in general or students with minority backgrounds?

Well, I think that's not how I came across finding this profession so – I think in general sometimes it's good to get out there cause people who might not know what we offer so that might be good for people to see – that we are here – that we do exist – if they don't take it upon themselves to look – it's a good way to find people but I don't know about the effectiveness of like -I think when I – there's such a – at least here – we get so many applicants – I was accepted – I think I only applied only 1 time – and I wasn't accepted right away and (?) was pretty high and I ended up getting in cause someone didn't accept. But that just kinda showed me I was like whoa there's a very high demand for those kinds of classes so I mean I think it's good to get out there and kinda tell people it's there but maybe there needs to be some openness – I don't know if it's out there – but you can't just walk in and it's not like any other program like if you say I'm gonna be a psych major – that's it –

It's a restricted program

Right. Right

Yeah it is different -more challenging to get into. Um so far as recruitment events like in high school or in your first year here you didn't participate in any of the recruitment events or read brochures or anything like that

No

About dental hygiene?

If anything I would have gotten a brochure from the college here the advisement office cause I was unsure so I'm sure they kinda help guide students too -they let them know the programs available I guess that would be another way- they'll give you curriculum sheets but I've never participated in any other kind of recruiting

Ok. In August of 2010 the Commission on Dental Accreditation that is in charge of accrediting dental schools – not necessarily dental hygiene but just dental schools – revised its standards to state that dental schools must have policies and practices to first of all achieve appropriate levels of diversity among its students, faculty and staff and second to engage in on-going systemic and focused efforts to attract and retain students faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and three to systemically evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity. Talk to me about how you feel about -these are essentially mandates to increase diversity um tell me how you feel about the idea of mandating policies to increase diversity and then what impact do you feel these initiatives would have on increasing the number of minority dental hygiene students?

I didn't know this existed – so these mandates they make sense it looks like it's almost in line – there's a lot of government like positions and they're big on the diversity -which it's understandable – I can see the side where it is important to get away from the minority and the segregation but I think it could negatively impact – I think we should maybe work on like you could recruit more like more minorities – but if you start to mandate that you have to add these certain levels and that means you would have to accept a certain number in order to be in line with the accreditation and that could affect – it could impact the level of the going back to the GPA and curriculum to get in so would that mean you would have to essentially accept people even if they're not qualified or if there's more people qualified

Well either that or maybe then looking at the requirement for the admissions you know like looking at GPA is that a fair assessment of people who could successfully complete the program? We've always thought that academics were the thing but is that really the main thing that gets you through the program -are there other people that have – you know sometimes I call them soft skills – maybe people have better communication skills um so those are some of the ways not necessarily lowering the standards but maybe looking at different things about the person that they might be successful

Wow you just broadened my perception on that – that makes sense. That's good – I guess I would just be concerned with -has anyone – is this for hygiene or dental

This isn't for hygiene just dental schools – right now this mandate it's actually Standard 1-4 they have to do that and it's not just for the dental hygiene at this point

I mean that's a good perception so you can get people and I think humans are -they adapt and can be taught so maybe GPA doesn't have to be the gold standard – I just don't know

– I think I feel the reason curriculum development is so rigid is to be in line with – there’s so many board exams and licensure so even if you could push a student through to pass through the dental hygiene curriculum at a given school and they develop the skills and they go along are those skills going to be enough to go through a national examination process but they could be

Um hmm

I guess you wouldn’t know til you do it

Right

I guess you’re right cause I just didn’t have the perception that because it’s always been so heavily based on academics and GPA

Ok well it was nice talking with you and just thanks for sharing all this information and discussion about it

It was interesting

Is there anything else you want to add before we end about this topic?

No.

Thank you.

Transcript #3

Ok so we're gonna record our conversation but again everything will be confidential and your name will not be linked to your responses in any way um so the first thing I wanted to ask you was what was your first recollection when you decided to become a dental hygienist?

Well I was probably about 9 years old and I knew I wanted to be in the dental field probably at about 9 I had a cousin who is since deceased and she was in the military and she was a dental hygienist in the military so I don't know it just stuck in my mind because of her sharing what she did for a living and all of that and from there I always knew cause I've always been attracted to people – when I see people that's the first thing I see and then my mom developed that habit – did you see her teeth – just from me and my mom had a great fear of the dentist and so when I got into the dental field her fear left cause you know a lot of times fear will keep us from things and so my experiences she allowed me to do stuff and then when I told her a dentist was ok she trusted then cause she had some bad experiences so probably I can honestly say it's all I've ever wanted to do and because it's been so hard to find a job in this field my mom always said you weren't born a hygienist so you don't have to die a hygienist meaning you don't always have to – but that's where my heart is and when you have a passion for something it's difficult to leave that passion –

You know you talked about the fear your mom had -can you talk a little more about that and where that stems from

And I'm gonna only base this on my knowledge I try to educate all my patients on especially what I'm doing a lot of times we go in and treat people and not really we're treating the condition but we're not looking at the whole picture – I can see when someone gets in my chair whether they're nervous or apprehensive based on their reactions a lot of the times they're quiet and you'll find that the beads will start up on their heads and they're very talkative and there's a nervousness there and when you see those things they need to be addressed before you even go further cause you want this person to come back – and so my mom had had a tooth pulled and I guess – my mom was born in '43 – no '36 – so if we say the access to care financial means to care probably wasn't there -I did have cleanings when I was a kid but I can't say it was constant and repetitious -so she had a tooth pulled and from this tooth pulled I can't remember whether she developed a dry socket but she bled a lot -and you know sometimes our concept is that it's a lot of blood but it's mixed with other things but I think it was a medical emergency cause she ended up having to go back in and from that it stopped everything

Yeah that stops a lot of people real quick when they've had a bad experience

Yeah and sometimes when you're educated on the things that happen after and making sure your patient really understands

Right about that

Um hmm

Can you talk a little bit more about who was it your aunt who was in the military?

It was my cousin

Your cousin –

She was much older she was like my second cousin but she was in the military

Can you talk about some of the conversations you had with her or how you knew about the field of dental hygiene through her?

Just basically from her explaining to me what she did for a living and she was in the military – actually I have her instruments- I mean she was in the military and she gave well in her passing they passed them on to me and our conversations weren't great but it's just she said what it was and I found out what it was and then we -the piqued interest came – she ah had did that for years- we talked about it you know are you still doing this – yes – you know it wasn't a great detail of what it went into it wasn't until I found out what that was that I understood it – you know it was like ok this is what I do -cause she was a cousin I really didn't know and I didn't grow up with cause she lived in Philadelphia but it was one year cause it was my grandmother's sister and they came in and her daughter which was the hygienist she came in with them and her and I immediately established this bond – and she was probably in her 20s or 30s when I was 9 and that's the age difference and it just stemmed from there -so we would conversate from time to time – and it would be what do you want to do and I was like I wanna be a dental hygienist and you know dental assisting was my first line and I did that for 10 years before I came into dental hygiene

Would you consider her a mentor?

I would say she would be a pivotal reason that I was into this un huh

Yeah – do you think you would be where you are today if it wasn't for her in your life and telling you about the field and having that role model

You never know what God's plans are so to say that -was she an active in this stage – yes but I don't know I might have been a doctor had I – I'm not – you understand what I'm saying – so I'm not – you don't know what your path is gonna be

Right. Right

But in this state in my life she was a pivotal part and influence

Right. Did she know that?

No.

No? um my next question I want to ask you is how did you make the decision to leave dental assisting and attend YSU for dental hygiene – what went into that whole decision?

That was easy -I needed money – \$5 an hour was not getting it done – that was an easy decision and that's something I always wanted to do -when I got out of school in '86

From high school?

Um hmm – I went straight into dental hygiene meaning that I went to school started my prerequisites tried to get within the program – but because of financial situation I need a job – so I went away to Akron Medical and Dental Assisting School and I completed that program – I actually lived in a nuns' home through my schooling which was really interesting and because they had a certain section for schoolers and then they had a certain section for people with problems – so I lived with all of that so that was an experience but in ah doing that after I went to dental assisting school that's when I came back here and I began to work – I worked for [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] (?) um there was one doctor who I worked with initially when I got out I can't remember his name – he was very old at that time – so I went from graduating from high school to YSU going to Akron Medical and Dental Assisting School and that 10 years led me to the path of still going to school working for [REDACTED] (?) cause that was my final stay in dental assisting – and then going into the dental hygiene program – that based on the fact that I needed more financing than 5-8 dollars an hour so I had to make some decisions for a better life

Did they have hygienists – [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] ?

Yes. Well I don't remember Dr [REDACTED] did because at that time your focus is what you're doing so I can't remember all of that but I do remember Dr. [REDACTED] -cause it's been 20 plus years I've been with him so -that aspect I so remember –

So coming to YSU was that because of convenience or what – how would you explain

What YSU? Because of what I knew – yeah – my mother wanted me to go to Kent State – she wanted me to go away and of course I was like – (?) so that wasn't gonna happen so the reason it was this school is because I wouldn't leave home – my mother kicked me out at 28 and

I know your close to

And so I left at 28 to move to Akron which I never really moved to Akron – I just had a place there

Alright so tell me about your experience as a dental hygienist – you graduated some years ago so how would you describe your career now?

In the beginning when I graduated from YSU I began to – I got hired at Chapel Hill [REDACTED] so I worked that about 2 years but I started there as an assistant because I hadn't

gotten my license yet I was a hygienist because I passed the test and everything well I should say we took the test but I hadn't passed it yet so I was working there as an assistant and they hired me on once I got my license as a hygienist and then I happened to put an application in for [REDACTED] so I ended up getting hired with him so I worked those 2 jobs but [REDACTED] was my full time job -and I say that's where I got most of my pivotal learning – he allowed me to be who I was he helped me learn –

What do you mean by that – he helped you learn?

Well I think I still was stuck in hygiene school when the hygienist or doctor comes in and they're checking your teeth and you're over them – like are you gonna find something and he always said to me backup [REDACTED] I'm not checking your work or grading you – I'm not checking you I'm doing what I need to do but I'm behind it – is it ok – and he's like lay back a little bit – have confidence in yourself -so he's like you are a good hygienist so that helped me build my confidence and want to increase my learning to how to treat my patients in a better and more efficient way and they were big on education -the practice was a million dollar company there were like 3 hygienists and 3 dentists and I would say at least every 3 months we brung in at least \$70,000 as each one of us as a hygienist and there was 2 full time and 1 part time

Sounds like he was a good mentor to you too

Um hmm

Him paying it forward

Um hmm. If hadda got stuck and I thank God because God has provisions for everything had I stayed at [REDACTED] I would have never learned what I learned there because that's not a teaching – it's get them in and get them out – whereas he was ok let's work on this – he had this TV and it played programs on educational periodontal disease and I think I was the only one that use it – I wore it out – he was like [REDACTED] you're going overboard – and I said I want my patients to understand and I remember he had a patient – this guy had been coming to him for about 16 years -periodontal involved duh duh duh – testing so many hygienists – he was gung ho I'm not doing anything I'm staying in this state and I treated him twice and the 2nd visit he said what do I have to do to change -education for me is key – and when you give the people the tool and put it in their hand – and make a conscious decision you'll find a change

Yeah. That's powerful. It is. It really is. Talk about how your career has changed over time I mean you did a little bit you talked about that 1st job you had -where are you today with your career or what are some of the challenges you have faced?

Um being an African American in this field is very difficult

How so?

We still have racism I just have to keep it honest - I remember I went for an interview in [REDACTED] and he said you're very qualified but I'm afraid to hire you -and I said why – and he said I don't know if my patients would stay and that's (?)

Yeah.

And that's – I mean if we look over the times – I was just in a seminar not too long ago and you don't see many African American anything -you don't see many Asian – you know I'm not focusing on just African American I'm just – but I can only identify with me – and I think it may have been maybe 3 African Americans in there total both of us were hygienists there was 4 – there were two doctors -but we have a room full of people not Asians not Hispanic that I could tell and so it makes it hard I mean even throughout -dealing a YSU I'm gonna digress – coming out of and my mother's seen this too – but when I was doing my prerequisites you find that you're the only one in the class – you don't see a lot of you – so it made it difficult so you sink or swim you learn how to get along with folks no matter who they are so but those are some of the things and how it's changed is that you do find that a lot -sometimes I do think that my nationality inhibits me getting the job -and then you find – I'll have [REDACTED] – oh you're smarter than I thought – just cause I'm African American – and I don't know why he would come to me and say something like that

Right. Right. When you talk to some of your colleagues about dental hygiene how do some of their experiences compare to yours

You know it's funny we've never really talked about the differences we may talk about the things that are headaches or we have to go through with hygiene but to say that and the only person I can relate to is [REDACTED] cause we talk with [REDACTED] – we talk sometimes but to say we've done the diversity with great – I can't even say we've done

You can't speak whether other African Americans have had difficulty finding jobs

Well I don't know any other African American dental hygienists – it's just me – in my world that I know – my friends are of a different race –

Yeah – hm how was your experience as a dental hygienist influenced you or not influenced you to encourage other people to become dental hygienists?

Well I have to be honest now I don't tell them to go into dental hygiene I actually steer whether they're Black White Hispanic or whoever that don't go into the field reason being that it's not lucrative any more -the dynamics of dental hygiene has changed – when you look at '96 you could leave one job and go find another – in 2016 you gotta hold on to what you have – if you look in the newspapers you look online and this is not just in Ohio this is across the board you can't find full time jobs in dental hygiene it's mostly part time or one day here or one day there and if you find anything and it's not only hygiene it's assisting too

Why do you think that's so?

The economy the dynamics of the economy we look at GM and their insurance factors and actually this practice is actually hurting to some degree cause people are choosing do I eat do I get my medications or do I go and get my teeth cleaned?

That's true I've seen that too -but say someone came to you – an African American high school student what would you tell them about dental hygiene or about a career what is the outlook for them?

Well again with what we have here my recommendation does not stand there both for assisting and hygiene because we don't have the dentists – I think -I can't remember what year it was but there was a statistical finding that a lot of doctors and dentists were leaving the area because of malpractice insurance in Ohio was so astronomical high so they're leaving and going to other areas where it's more affordable -but in our conversation you said it the dental schools are trying to find more African Americans so we don't have that influx and even if you look here – I think we may have if we're talking about dentists it's only 2 -that would be Dr. [REDACTED] who has been here for 40 50 60 70 years a long time – and he's about to leave – and Dr. (?) where he works for [REDACTED] Dental or somewhere he works so the others have left there was [REDACTED] and I don't know if she's still in the area cause I don't hear about her –

Yeah I don't either

So it's only those 2 so when you look at the dynamics what are your choices?

It's a good point. Here's a couple statistics I want to share with you in 2013-2014 there were a total of 4.3% Black, 11.5% Hispanic, .6% Indian, and 71.7% White or Caucasian dental hygiene students enrolled in the 344 accredited dental hygiene programs in the US

I can believe that – this has not changed – your dynamic that changed would probably be in the fact that you have an increase – if you would have done this years ago you wouldn't have seen African American -the statistics would have been totally different I believe it would have been lower and that's sad for this amount of time cause I've been in this field 20 some years and even when I go to the seminars I still don't see a change I might see 1 or 2 more – is it where I'm at – is it my location – in Atlanta maybe I would see more –

But this is national

Right

Yeah. Um let's talk a little about recruiting students – for most dental hygiene programs the highest priority we have when recruiting students is students with high GPA high standardized test scores such as ACTs or SATs -what role did academics play when you were accepted into dental hygiene – was that a big concern for you did you have a –

You know I heard the rumors about oh you had to have such and such and such and such to get in to get in the program and all I can say is prayer changes things because I made it and I probably did not carry all that stuff – however I got in – was I a quota I don't know

What makes you think that?

That's the law of the land -I worked at St. [REDACTED] hospital I was the 1st African American to come across their dental plan- did they want me there – not at all and I can say that with surety –

St. [REDACTED] didn't want you?

In that dental clinic – No

But you worked there?

UM hmm

As a student?

I worked there

They hired you there?

Um hmm

And you felt that you were

Um hmm yep

What kind of things gave you that impression?

Things people would say I'll give you a prime example – there was a nurse that worked in the department and when she seen me come across the stage she was an African American nurse and she called me into her office she said I'm glad to see you she said it's long been needed and I'm looking at her like what are you talking about so I asked her what does that mean – she said I've been here over 20 some years and I've never seen one of you here – and I'm glad to see one of you here –

In Youngstown?

In Youngstown.

Hmm. Getting back to the fact that maybe thinking there was a quota when you were accepted into dental hygiene – were you interviewed?

That's been so long ago I can't remember – I don't even remember if I was interviewed I don't ever remember having an interview but I don't know if it happened

Ok because just so you know we've never had a quota

No but I'm saying when you look at things and you're looking at a whole picture and we're talking about an outside picture all I can see is

I could see why somebody would think that

Exactly. Exactly

But I want you to know that you were admitted on your merits

Right. Right. Well I'm glad to know that

Not to say quotas are bad

Right.

Cause I think there is a place for that

Um hmm. Um hmm.

I know as long as I've been in dental hygiene 20 some years – we don't interview and we don't look at race

Right.

It's always been

But that doesn't mean subconsciously for somebody else you're doing it or it could happen

True

You understand where I'm going with that?

Sure.

Cause there are things that are in line step by step but are they always followed – that's an individual – you have to look – and I have to say – Dr. [REDACTED] is a wonderful person - she's been great to me -all of the staff has – but I take a special heart for Dr. [REDACTED] but did I ever feel outcasted because of my race – no in the dental hygiene program – but I'm looking outside from a perspective and when I got into hygiene and I didn't make it to graduate in the '95 class I was so angry and I was so upset but I always say and I pay that homage to Dr. [REDACTED] because I think she was the one who headed to keep me back not let me go and that was the best thing she could have ever done cause that's when the light clicked and I really understood so I didn't leave hygiene not understanding how to perform it

Great.

Had I graduated in '95 I'd have been a lost little duckling with what I see out here

You needed extra time to grow

Right

That's good that somebody saw that -well if we didn't accept students if we just looked at the academics can you think of other qualities we should consider in students and applicants besides GPAs – do you think that's somehow an obstacle to students of diversity getting in?

Well the program is great if you work hard so you don't want to set people up for failure you have these guidelines um it's not a regular grading scale so if you have someone who's academically challenged are we gonna offer certain extra things to help them – or do we throw them in the same category as everybody else cause you couldn't do that and expect it to be successful

What kind of things would you think we would offer them?

Extra tutoring and outside tutoring and things of that nature -hands on help -certain staff members willing to from the didactical standpoint

That's a good point. So open house programs, brochures recruitment personnel campus tours – these are all ways we try to get students interested in dental hygiene and get the word out there about the profession – what do you think of the effectiveness of these techniques

Well I would probably say that people are not interested or the techniques are not effective -the only thing I can think and I mean today you tell someone oh I'm a dental hygienist and they say what is that? You still have people who have seen hygienists and they're still asking the question what is that and I think maybe media time – you know you don't see any advertisements of YSU dental hygiene program – I don't know if it's on cable – but you don't have the media – look at Ross – they're advertising their thing so that's the way they get people to come in – St. E's does it -for nursing programs – and going into the schools -talk time in the schools I don't ever remember anything like that anybody from the dental aspect coming into schools for career day talking about opportunities in this field and what you have to offer – those are means to gravitate people into that field

Right they have to be aware

Right.

That's a good suggestion. When you were interested in dental hygiene and coming to YSU did you take part in any of these activities or

No.

No?

Hm hmm. I'm antisocial so. I don't even know if I went to open house – you know when they have an open house I don't think I ever went – maybe the lecture aspect and then I'm out of it

Right. Do you have any other ideas on how to get people interested in dental hygiene in the field?

The only thing I can say is exposure – unless they have the exposure they do not know. You're looking at cost effectiveness – sending letters out to potential clients that's probably not the best avenue -

The only thing I can think of is media or I'm on Facebook every now and then and Facebook does have where they have opportunities for going to school for dental hygiene so they do some advertising but that's probably scrolled over

Um hmm

And it's not seen enough to make an impact – you see dental hygiene and it doesn't pertain to you why would I click on it?

Right

If I'm watching TV I have no choice unless I'm a flicker to get that in

Here's another thing I wanted to share with you – in August of 2010 the commission on dental accreditation -that accredits dental schools – we have standards we have to follow for dental school – they have to have policies and practices in place that show that they achieve appropriate levels of diversity among its students faculty and staff. Secondly they have to show that they are engaging in ongoing focused efforts to attract and retain students faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and third they have to evaluate these strategies they're using to improve an institutional climate for diversity. This was put into place in 2010. Talk to me about how you feel about having these types of policies enforced to achieve diversity in dental hygiene programs?

Well it probably would increase diversity cause now you're gonna be focused on that avenue to make that change – if you leave it null and void as you see – it remains the same or changes a little bit –

Were you aware the dental schools had this requirement?

No.

For about the last 6 years or so

Back when I was younger in assisting I knew all the doctors now I can't remember names and who's out there now I have no clue – I think that would be beneficial then you are able to have markers of success – and being able to statistically show and see how it has

changed or stayed the same – whether it's beneficial or not – you readvise on changes to make it better

Right. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Just thank you for letting me express

Transcript #4

Ok I'm going to start the recording and tell me what your very first recollection was when you decided to become a dental hygienist?

When I decided to become a dental hygienist I actually was in the dental office getting my teeth cleaned – and I was on the verge of graduating from my bachelor's degree in management information systems and I was talking to my hygienist and I was like I really don't want to do this for the rest of my life -and she said look into hygiene – I loved teeth and she encouraged me and I went ahead with my bachelor's degree worked in computers for 2 years got married moved to Pittsburgh and I'm like I don't want to do this so that's when I applied for hygiene got into a school in Pennsylvania and went for the orientation – declined – cause I found out I was pregnant and I moved to Ohio and then applied for YSU but that is literally how I applied for hygiene – I love teeth – I don't know why but I've always loved teeth always wanted braces but did not need them – first thing I look at is people's teeth – I think that's what it is – I enjoy teeth –

Tell me a little more about what this hygienist said to you

She basically had said that this is a great field – she did not really have to talk to me about teeth in general – I think she focused more on the money aspect and it's very flexible in scheduling so when you have kids you can schedule when you want to work as far as like I only wanna work Mondays I only wanna work Tuesdays and you can work different offices um and she said that you made decent money but I think that's all I really looked into at that point um coming into the program I don't know if I necessarily knew it would just be what we were doing and then the more and more I got into the program I realized this is really what I – I mean I love to do it – my patients think there's a difference in how I clean and I had one hygienist come to me and said I've never had my teeth cleaned that way and I had one person tell me you know the difference between you and other hygienists is that you care about what you do and I just enjoy it -like teaching people what they need to do -I enjoy the satisfaction of seeing my results when they listen to me and after I'm done scaling and root planning and when the students figure out that it clicks – I'm like I don't know I get a lot of satisfaction when I – you know my results -patients are happy that

Did you ever touch base with that person or was there anyone else who encouraged you along the way as a mentor to you –

No you know after that I think I did get married so I didn't touch base with her again but once I came to YSU cause you had to take prerequisites I met a girl who also was applying for the dental hygiene program and we both had to go through our prerequisites together – well she had decided she was gonna go into dentistry and that convinced me to become a dentist with her so I said ok this is great cause honestly as a dentist you have to be a dentist and understand business because you are an employer you can't just be a dentist – and because I had my business background I was like alright I'll look into it – I

actually got accepted into YSU's program – and declined it because I decided I was going to be a dentist and then part of the things you have to do is you have to go and observe well I observed my childhood dentist and realized oh this is not what I want to do there was something about it that I knew just wasn't me and I really didn't have any type of mentoring – I just knew that's not what I wanted to do -I do not know why I chose the dental field something was leading me towards so I really did not have a mentor to tell me you know what this you know if you go this way – no – everything just kinda fell into place -and this is where I'm supposed to be

Do you think your life would be different if that person had not have encouraged you? Would you have come about it another way?

Um I think I would have ultimately ended up as doing something medically – I did before I decided on hygiene -my mom had convinced me to look at radiation technology so I went and observed at a hospital in Pittsburgh and they put me in the emergency room and I was helping move a gurney and I guess I bumped something and the patient got mad at me and I was like oh I cannot do this and I don't know what made me think to go to the hospital and every time I go to the hospital there's a certain – no I'm not a big fan of the hospitals so I don't know why I even opted for that but she said it because maybe you can go elsewhere other than a hospital but this particular hospital had radiology school so that would have been into so that's probably why I went there but – I think I've always wanted to do something medically in the health professions

Possibly because of your mom

Um yeah she discouraged me from nursing from an early age on she really discouraged me – I don't know what her rationale was but I remember her coming home one night and she said I don't ever want you to be a nurse -and that stuck with me and so I never went that route -as I was going through getting my bachelor's degree I always liked biology and I never pursued the degree of biology I stuck with what I thought I wanted to do and that was accounting so I went through business program and realized I really did not like accounting so I was like well I have enough credits and we're just gonna stick with business and I found something that worked with me- so I don't know if I would have ended up anywhere else – I've always been fascinated with teeth you know before she said anything I think I would have ended up at the same place – it may have taken a lot longer to realize it but I think I still would have ended up

It's interesting to think about how you got here because a lot of people I interviewed and surveyed said that they had some type of mentor whether it was a childhood dentist or hygienist or someone who got them into the profession – you just never think about it

It was just that hygienist she happened to mention it to me and one time she told me to read I think it's called What Color Is My Parachute

I remember that yes

Is that the book?

Yes

Ok um she told me to read the book I bought it and never read it and after she mentioned it and it just stuck and I'm like you know what I think I would really like to do it -that truly is the first time cause I never thought of dentistry like I said I've always been fascinated with braces – you know you put the (?) and foil on the teeth and that always fascinated me so maybe that was the moment then when she mentioned the book – it just stuck and something just opened up and I was like I'll try this out and things just fell into place –

That's interesting. So and then how did you make the decision to attend YSU?

Well it was more of the fact like you said I did get accepted and I can't even remember the school in Pennsylvania where I met my Big Sister and shortly after that found out I was pregnant and we moved back to Ohio because my mother-in-law lived here and I looked and I saw YSU had a dental hygiene program -it was more so of a convenience – really didn't want to stay out in Pittsburgh we had no child care so that's the reason why I came to YSU. I did not do any research it was like this is more convenient and this is where I'm going

Tell me about your experience as a dental hygienist today -how you feel about your career and your experience as far as finding employment working if it met your expectations all those things

I honestly believe it got beyond what I had expected -because I truly have a passion about this – you can ask my friends when my kids were young they would have people spend the night and I would be did you brush did you floss and if they did brush I literally went to their mouths and flossed for them – so no one spent the night after that

I would have sent my kids to your house

Yeah so you can ask my kids friends and yeah like [REDACTED] will floss my teeth if I spend the night so -I just have a passion for it but as far as experience goes I truly have enjoyed it – I only worked for 2 dentists and I've been with the current one 11 years – the one prior to that I worked for 3 years and for 2 years I was working between the 2. But I have really enjoyed working for them – I've filled in in different places and you kinda feel no I know things are different here-I'm glad the offices I work at – really could be a comfort level – I enjoy what I do in my office- I don't mind helping a little bit but maybe the environment throws me off but I don't mind filling in it's more of an acclamation trying to get -doing work with another office so I do experience the differences but for the most part I've been with the one dentist for 11 years

What is it about that dentist that keeps you there?

Um well I think you know that my dentist was sick -before he got sick I had been there 5 years so the 6 years after I've had 2 separate dentists – but the same practice – the first 5 years there was something -personality – the office itself – the clientele but they attracted it was close to home -he worked with my hours – initially I only worked 1 day a week there and I was commuting to Sedonia 2 times a week and then the current place I'm at is the full time hygienist was going to school and just decided she didn't want to work – so I took over her position so I was full time and when I started working here he was OK with me taking the Fridays off and going to another hygienist – so he's worked with me and I just like the environment I knew that has a lot to do with your experience -if you don't like your environment no matter how much you love it, it just – it's a negative environment you don't want to go to it –

Right and who you work for has a lot to do with that -making you feel comfortable and

Yes

Give you room to grow

Yes he really did have confidence in my abilities and it was reassuring knowing I could say you know I need you to take a look at this – I need your opinion on – it might need treatment – we sync and that means a lot too when you're on the same page as your doctor so I like that – they boost my confidence not in a cocky way -they make me feel good because they make me feel like I'm an asset

They value your

Yes they value my opinion my ethics -yes they do

That is huge – that's important. Do you think your career – you said before you kinda think it's gone beyond what you expected -is there anything else you want to contribute to that do you want to talk about your teaching experience?

I was gonna say – I never thought I would be an instructor – I felt once I was done with hygiene school I was just gonna work quietly and never imagined coming back to YSU – I always believe if it's meant to be it'll happen and things will fall into place – and honestly – things- I never imagined myself instructing others to do what I do -everything has just fallen into place – my first job was from an instructor here – he knew how I worked clinically offered me a position um when I worked for the second dentist it was just more of a fill in so I really didn't have to find anything it just fell into place

You're fortunate that way

Yes and see that's why I think that this is what I'm meant to do things are there – I've worked so hard to get to the point that I'm at but people believe in me they give me the opportunity and I try to make sure that they – I meet their expectations and I'm always

trying to go above and beyond cause I always want them to feel that they made the right choice in selecting me

That's a great attitude

Thank you

So things have gone well for you but what challenges have you faced too as a dental hygienist

You know remember how I said that when that patient got mad at me when I bumped the gurney and I was like oh I can't do this I can't deal with that many people well in hygiene you don't get friendly people sometimes – they don't like the dentist – they flat out tell you I don't like coming here – well that's something I had to overcome – cause I like to please people – I do not like when I hurt people's feelings so I've really had to work at just telling the patient as it is as far as – I don't want to hurt their feelings but your gums look really bad so you have to tactfully tell them – to communicate better – even here in school you have students who are a little more challenging academically and personality - wise so you have to learn to adjust – I'm a people person so I really don't like confrontation so I really have to think about how to approach a person without being confrontational but get my point across so that aspect is challenging for me

That's good. Um when you talk to some of your colleagues just people you work with in the dental hygiene profession how do their experiences compare to yours

I usually will ask you know how long do you get for prophies and what I'm finding is I get a lot of time – I get an hour per patient so I'm pretty fortunate and I find that they get less than me and still have to do the same amount of work now I do not know base rates or whatever – I'm assuming they probably make more because of production – I've always told myself I am quality versus quantity and I have a couple colleagues that do work in corporate dentistry and I would never make it in corporate – I will tell a patient what they need -and I don't like to say push but if they understand the rationale why they need it they are apt to do it and in my mind in corporate it's push push push you're selling selling selling

You have to meet a certain quota?

Right

Per day or per week?

Correct and that's another reason I enjoy working with the dentist that I have worked with they have the same philosophy as me – it's quality vs quantity I'm not saying spend 2 or 3 hours on a patient but you finish the patient in the time allotted do your education do everything you need to do efficiently in that time frame – I do not know how other hygienists do it I know when I fill in – one it's a different environment so you gotta figure how to use the x-ray how to use the

I used to do that a lot

Yeah

In a lot of different offices

It's hard because – take instruments – what is the protocol for (?)

Yeah everything is different

Yeah everything is different so I try to ask the dentist before what are your protocols for (?) protocols for perio-maintenance I need to know all these prior because I don't want to be just thrown in there and get flustered – I lost my train of thought –

We were talking about how your colleagues – what their experiences are compared to yours –

A lot of times I will start to question myself so I will ask what do you do in this case just so we're on the same page it gives me another avenue to try – maybe I'm doing something wrong – and we'll do it this way and it works – I really don't ask people

As far as their career

Ok

Do you think most of them have been employed like you have since school with the same dentist? Or do you think there are struggles in finding employment?

I'm just trying to think of the couple that I really talk to um the ones that I can think of they've been with their dentists long term - I don't like change – or I can't find a job but so far everyone I can think of has had something long term um when I think of someone who is constantly switching trying to find a dentist is it the dentist or is it the hygienist? What's wrong? I don't know – it could just be that person – trying to find the right fit – I was fortunate to find my fit –

But that doesn't always happen though

Right. Right

You are fortunate that way. Well it sounds like you've had a pretty good career so far so how has your career as a hygienist influenced or not influenced you to encourage others to become hygienists?

If I find that they truly are interested in oral health, then I'll educate them on what we do -we have 2 patients who are very interested in hygiene when they came in they always talked to me and I always tell them this is what you do and if you ever want to come in and observe you're more than welcome to – my nieces had career day where they had to go and visit places and both of them wanted to come see me – so they came and saw me and really this is not what I want to do – um another friend of mine her son was just looking for a – just wanted a profession that made a lot of money – and he looked into

hygiene and I said you know why doesn't he come and observe what I do – if he doesn't like what I do he's not gonna enjoy the profession

So true

When I was in hygiene school I had a couple students who came in and didn't like what they had what we were doing so they dropped out and I know of one person who graduated from the program actually 2 and maybe 3 they don't do hygiene

Really?

No. it's 4 now I just thought of someone else – but just to get through

Interesting.

Yeah

I'll have to do a study on that sometime – how many actually practice after

Right. Look at me I went through management information systems that basically is computer Programming-I just wanted to get the degree over with – just graduate and get a degree and then it's not what I wanted to do – so this is my second career and it's the best thing I ever did – I worked hard – my daughter was 7 weeks old when I started the program my son was 2 – It was really tough on me cause my husband worked my mother-in-law took care of the kids and dental hygiene school was not like a traditional program –

That's really true. So if you find that people are really interested in hygiene then you would encourage that –

Yes. Yes.

Don't tell somebody off the street hey go into hygiene cause you're gonna make a lot of money –

Right. Exactly because if you go in for the money you lose that passion and it's all about again quantity so I always believe when you have a passion for it it's not a job – it's a career – I have my days where I just don't want to go into work I think everyone has those so you get in there and my day flies – most people don't enjoy teeth – I can't just go up to someone who just does not like teeth and say you know you really should look into the hygiene profession because – a lot of patients tell me I couldn't do what you do – I'd rather go to the gynecologist than see you – I'm like ok –

Ok I'm gonna get your opinion on something else – in 2013-2014 there were a total of 4.3% Black, 11.5% Hispanic, .6% Indian, and 71.7% White Caucasian dental hygiene students in the 344 accredited dental hygiene programs in the US so I just wanted to get your opinion on what these statistics mean to you

I was thinking about that cause I think in your survey you had asked something along that line – honest I think it comes back down to whether they like it – this isn't a profession that you go into and you either really like it or you really don't and I don't really believe that's its ethnicity – in this area there aren't a lot of Asians so we're not gonna have a lot of enrollment of Asians- but where I'm from in Virginia Beach I know multiple hygienists there are multiple Philippine doctors – that's area based – but if you're saying from all the accredited I just think it comes down to whether you like teeth or not – I do not know why the Caucasians it ends to gear toward them – like the nursing profession it was all females and now males are starting to get into it – growing up it was all female now you got male nurses and there's nothing wrong with that but it wasn't the norm even back in the 90s – I don't know how to even increase it – it just comes down to whether you like it or not. Another thing could be that if in their country it is something that is not of priority to them they don't really think of going into that particular profession if they come here to the US – I remember back to my mock patient – this patient was a Chinese male he was 30 years old and had never had his teeth cleaned – and he came in and I used him as my mock patient but for him to go 30 years how could he have been exposed to this profession his wife came in for a friend of mine and I don't think she was periodontally involved – she was more (?) lesions – I don't know if she'd ever had her teeth cleaned – I know in the Philippines that is not a priority unless you're in the higher socio-economic brackets because – it's a luxury to have a toothbrush when I went to the Philippines my mom – you know how they sell it for a buck – I think my mom bought so many and Maureen had just said go ahead and take these toothpastes and we gave them to the family cause yeah it's

Do they even have dental hygiene profession?

You know they do – I actually looked it up when we were in Manilla – one of the things I wanted to do was go and visit a dentist and see how hygienists – and I didn't get that opportunity – I was so discouraged – but they do because I have friends my parents used to – a lot of the kids there when they go to school – like tourism – they come to the US and they will do internships – so my mom found out about them – wanted them to come to the house – washed their clothes – cause they had to pay for all that stuff – so I have a couple of girls I still keep in contact with and they get braces - you typically don't see that in the barrios – the lower economic sections – you'll see them with a lot of decay – so I think a lot has to do with exposure too what is the norm to them just like a patient who – dental neglect and all of a sudden they come in for pain so I think it's more of what they're exposed to growing up I don't even know how to increase this –

Well one of the things is like in dental schools we have our mission on dental accreditation we have to meet all these requirements, in 2010 in dental schools they added a standard that says that dental schools have to achieve appropriate levels of diversity among students faculty and staff and so it's mandated they have to engage in on going focused efforts to attract and retain students faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and evaluate those strategies to improve the institutional

climate for diversity so it's not just in dental hygiene where you have this disparity it's also in dental schools

The dental profession itself?

Yeah. Yeah. So dental schools – they're starting there and saying there they have to make conscious efforts to recruit for diversity

Ok

So we don't have this now in dental hygiene but what do you think if we could have something like this or we should have something like this?

My only thing is when you start saying that you need to have certain types of people- I mean ethnicity – whether that person has the ability to do that – you'll have and I'm just gonna use Caucasian – and Indian – I'm just picking an ethnicity – if the Caucasian person has the ability to do everything well and you get

Academically you mean?

Um clinically and yeah academically and you get an Indian student who isn't as proficient – in my mind what this states is we're gonna keep – push- the person who can't meet proficiency just to maintain this level of diversity and I do not think this is really fair cause then you come down to well the only reason I'm not getting in is because I'm Caucasian – and even though I'm a minority I do not believe that is right – it's one thing if the Indian student really surpasses by all means and that person – I think it's more of that you need to earn not be given – I don't know I have an issue with that but that is my take on it

That leads me in to the next question cause for most dental hygiene programs the highest priority we use when recruiting students is ACT scores SAT scores GPAs to accept them into the program – it's all based on academics – what role did academics play when you were accepted into the program?

I think that's truly what got me in – I didn't know what else I had to do – did we have to do observations? I think we did prior to and I don't even know what I observed –

It might have been after you were in

Ok I can't remember if I did – I remember doing it after

I think we reinstated that after you were in

Ok cause I don't remember – students who have come to observe me they came before they entered the program and then they still had to do it when they were in the program

I was just asking about academics – so you had to have a good GPA when you got in –

Honestly the first time I went through college I kinda blew it off – I didn't have the greatest GPA – I was someone who just graduated and my parents paid for that – I said I want to do hygiene – I paid for it – completely different attitude and I did well in those classes I had to take – had to catch one class I did at the other university I did not do well so I was kinda upset I had to redo it but I had to think different I was more mature I was a non-traditional student so made a big difference so academics – the classes that you guys looked into those helped me get it – if you would have taken my former GPA I don't think I would have made it –

If a student doesn't have say as good an academic record are there any other qualities that could be looked at to decide on accepting a student into the program and not necessarily saying someone not qualified should be accepted – are there other factors that could be looked at that would maybe be some predictors, they could be successful too other than academics –

Ah maybe looking into – if someone is more into a health care profession – if it's a health care profession they may be more apt to do because this is more caring – giving patient care – I mean even if someone is good academically if they don't have a chair-side manner they are not going to enjoy the profession so I think looking at personality has something to do with it – grade like you said – I did well with my grades but I also think I'm a caring person – if my mindset was to make money I wouldn't have cared so I think the personality – taking that into account um but I know you have to have some sort of a baseline so – academics it is a good predictor cause our classes aren't easy and you have to be studious – you have to understand you can kill someone so you really have to know what you're doing so academics is a good baseline but ah also – if they're people below your level maybe then you should look into the personality – what they truly enjoy and see but if they're straight off the board then you beat them in there and you don't like them and if you don't like them as an instructor who says the patients are going to

Things like open house, brochures, campus tours, recruitment personnel these are all different recruitment techniques that we have just to attract the general student how do you feel about some of these techniques and do you have any ideas for any different things we can do to attract more students?

I think those techniques – at least you're exposing them cause there may be some that have never been exposed – I had a couple new patients that came into the clinic and didn't realize it was this involved -they don't realize how much we have to know so I want my teeth cleaned – can't you just clean my teeth

Like for a haircut

Right, and it's not just clean your teeth everything is related in the body – orally systemically it's all connected and people don't get that – so I think when you allow the general public to come in and observe they see a different view – so I think it does open up – now getting them to really get into it – one of the things is when you get into hygiene your upfront cost isn't cheap so you're truly investing – you go into accounting –

engineering what do you pay for calculator and maybe books? You go into hygiene you gotta get the loops you got uniforms you got instruments – you're constantly putting money out there so that also could be an issue you know once you get into the program what if a student doesn't have the financial means to pay you know the instruments because they do have to have instruments you have to so that could be one thing – doing that open house but if people don't come it doesn't do any good – do you do the open house just here –

Pretty much

What if you did it in Kilcawley to open up a little bit more cause if you just do it in Cushwa if the students don't come to Cushwa they won't see it

We have had at it at Kilcawley before yeah

Ok

But we really only advertise it to the campus community and maybe advertising it somewhere else might generate more interest

Right and I know there have been times like Choffin they'll get patients there and they'll refer them to us so that also opens it up patient referrals – you know I had a really good cleaning why don't you go and get one – and if you get someone in here to clean and they get interested then that student can talk to them and encourage them uh I'm assuming that has happened I know there have been a couple according to the student there was a student who was a pre-dental hygiene and came in but I don't know if the student did continue I didn't do any follow up but it opens it up when the students can go out there and attract different patients to come in it's another form of exposure – ah at Canfield Fair they have the dental booth

Um hmm

Why don't we do something for YSU?

I don't know

I mean they have a YSU thingy in the

Tent yeah

Yeah the tent and I think we've had stuff about dental hygiene there – have we ever had students go there and talk

Huh uh

Maybe that's something cause I think passing out a brochure – I know when I get brochures – pitch it -right out -waste of paper – but if you have someone there to answer the questions it might be a little more

Um hmm. You know why don't you tell me a little bit more. What about high school?

That could be an option with high school but most teenagers don't have the greatest of hygiene so as they get older they'll realize it but in high school the only thing I knew I wanted to do was accounting

And no one could change your mind –

Ah the grade did

I got done with accounting 2 and I'm like we gotta switch to something else so it does open it up – I know a lot of professions will go in and talk to high school students but I think the only reason students go to assemblies is it gets us out of classes -but as to whether they listen – it's an avenue to explore and see how many you can attract from that – I don't know if you'd have a better option going into the medical building where you have where people do walk around and I hate to say it but if you give something free – you are more apt to get someone

Yeah. Yeah. Well alright thank you – all I wanted to ask you is there anything else you would like to add before we end?

No. if I think of something I'll let you know

Ok thank you very much

Transcript #5

Ok so we're gonna start our conversation now and I just wanna get your verbal permission that's it's ok to tape our conversation?

Yes it's ok

Alright so the first question I have for you is what was your first recollection when you decided to become a dental hygienist?

I would say I was probably in my early 20s and at the time I was a cosmetologist and I was realizing the pay rate for cosmetologists was up and down so I decided to go back to school and I wanted to do something in the health field and so I started to look for different options that fit into me and I researched dental hygiene that's when I saw it kinda fit my personality more

So did anybody like – did you have a dental hygienist or a dentist who said hey this might be a profession for you or was it just kinda looking around on your own

No I was just looking around on my own

Ok alright and once you decided to go into dental hygiene did you have a mentor or anyone that kind of encouraged you or helped you along the way?

Um once I got into the program I had what we call a big sis and she kinda helped me when I had questions but prior to that I didn't have anyone to talk to about it I just kinda did my own research online and different things like that – talk to counselors and stuff like that

Alright and when you went to the dentist did a dental hygienist clean your teeth or was it a dentist

It was a dental hygienist

Ok and did you happen to talk with her a little bit about her role

Yes I was interested in the program and um when I went to get my cleanings done I asked some questions how did she like it um how the program was and she was very helpful

Ok alright um and then when you went to YSU how did you make that decision to attend YSU?

Um when I was researching YSU was the closest campus that offered the program I think the next one was in Cleveland so that was kinda far

Ok and did you attend any of the open houses or recruitment activities that we have um

I don't think that I did any recruitment I think I did attend the open house though

Ok to find out more about the program

Yes

Ok can you tell me a little bit about your experience as a dental hygienist today?

Um I definitely like being a dental hygienist I love my patients um I think some of the cons about being a dental hygienist is finding a job – it's very hard to find a job actually when I graduated it took me a couple of months and I had to do temp work for about a year then finally I had to move outside the city to a bigger city and I found a full time job

Um hmm. What do you think was the biggest obstacle in finding a job?

Well just someone to hire you a lot want you to have experience and you're like trying to get experience and then some physicians offer part time so if you're looking for full time that was kinda hard to find full time positions as well

Ok so you had to move to Columbus to find a job?

Yes.

That's what took you to Columbus?

Yes.

And did you find a full time job?

Yes I did.

Good. How long have you been there?

I've been there I think it's going on 3 years

Wow time flies

Yes it does

Whew. Ok and when you were in dental hygiene school what was your experience?

Um I loved it – it was nice – um it made you try to focus and um prioritize everything so it drew a different strength out of me – and then overall I liked it and I graduated and I appreciated everything and it made me a better person so – I would definitely recommend it for others

So do you think your dental hygiene career is what you thought it would be?

Um yeah I thought it would be a lot easier to get a job – um – it's a lot harder and the pay rate wasn't what I expected – a lot of dentists want to start off lower than what was expected so financially I think that was a surprise to me

Um hmm. Right. Um have you faced any challenges other than having a hard time finding that initial job or someone to give you an opportunity? Have you had other challenges as a hygienist?

Um I'm trying to think – no I just think it's been finding a job – I can't prove if it was my race or not I mean sometimes you do feel like that but I don't have any proof of that um and I think that kinda affects you sometimes and that's my personal perspective and how I feel and also when it's time to get a raise financially when you're in that job – there's no one there to talk to if you feel like you're not getting the raise you thought you deserved – there's not a union or anybody you can go to regulate everything so I think that is an issue

Right. I heard you say that you thought maybe race played some factor was there some particular example or was it a particular comment someone made that made you feel that way

Yes when I was in Youngstown when I was temping at many offices I did that for about a year and I was with a certain company and I went all over and I required – and I was at an office my friend was at and she was getting ready to leave and she told me about the position so he had me fill in for her so I could kinda move my way into that position so I was doing that and she left and another hygienist came in and she was of the Caucasian descent and she got the job before me and she wasn't even in (?) with them – so um they just kinda said well it's because you didn't have your license yet and I just kinda felt like that's not what it was cause I had explained to them that I was working on getting an anesthetic(?) license and he was fine that wouldn't be any problem so they don't directly tell you it's your race but I – you have to read in-between the lines – so I think sometimes you do experience that in this field

Right how did you feel when that happened?

Um kinda upset and sad at the same time

Have you talked to any colleagues that have had similar experience to this?

Um yes it was a student and she was a year behind me from YSU and when that happened I called her and I wanted to see her perspective and she wanted the same thing and she said yeah she couldn't find a job and she just kinda temped from office to office and she did experience something similar t

Right. Right. How frustrating –

Yes

That had to be frustrating. Um when you like – we just talked a little bit about when you talked to your colleagues to see what their perspective was um have you talked to other colleagues and have their experiences been the same you know as far as finding a job or finding a job with benefits and things like that?

Yes; I've talked to other dental hygienists and um they've been able to find a job but they weren't African American though – their experiences seem to be a little different than mine -and even when I explained this to them they said wow you can't beat that and like this person is hiring and they're telling me this person is hiring and they try to help me and then when they see that they're like – they feel bad because I don't know they didn't hire you or – so I have talked to different cultures about it not just African Americans but just trying to see is it everyone who's having a hard time or is due to my culture so –

Right. Right. So what kind of office are you working in now?

Um I work at [REDACTED] so it's more an incorporated office – I wish I could be in a private office which is what I preferred but they gave me a chance and everyone is very nice – and diverse there so It's different –

Ok

Diverse is nice

Is that important to you to be in an office with some diversity?

I mean it's nice but I could be in any office that was nice for me it doesn't have to be diverse I can kinda adapt to any environment

Right. Right. Um how has your experience as a dental hygienist influenced you or not influenced you to encourage other people to get into the profession?

I've definitely encouraged others to get into the profession cause even though I don't make what I desire I make more than probably the average person or at least on average in the area so I tell people it is a good job you don't work as hard and you make decent wages and you work decent hours so it's kinda not equivalent to nursing –

Right so if you don't have to work a midnight shift

Right hours are a lot better I think it's a little bit better personally so I encourage people and I tell them about it and some people are a lot more aware of the options so-

Um one of the statistics I want to share with you is that in 2013-2014 there were a total of 4.3% Black%, 11.5% Hispanic, .6% Indian and 71.7% White or Caucasian dental hygiene students in all the dental hygiene programs in the country which is 344 programs. What do these statistics mean to you about the profession of dental hygiene?

That a lot of minorities aren't becoming dental hygienists

Yeah any thoughts on that?

Um yeah I'm not sure why -why is that – is it that they don't know about it or that's not ideal for them or they're not getting into the program – I'm not sure exactly why that is

Why more don't pursue the career huh and actually go into it um you don't have any ideas though on why or how we can get more minorities

I know just from the people within my circle they really don't know it exists they don't know that that's a career to even choose like nursing and (?) doctors but you go in there and they're like well what do you do and I'm like I'm a dental hygienist and well what's that -so a lot of it is ignorance like they truly don't know it even exists and then the other part is when they know it exists the requirement – you have to have a certain grade point average to get in there and certain classes like chemistry and micro-biology and a lot of minorities don't have like proper education and they are in inner-city schools so folks who are not properly being educated and then have to take chemistry it's a challenge for them -so a lot of people don't have the grades even to apply –

Right and that's one of our main factors when we accept students is the academics and the GPAs -do you think that should be the main priority in accepting students or do you think there are other things that should be considered

Uh I know it has to be a priority because you want to be sure you're able to obtain the knowledge and understand everything well -so I do think the grades should be a part of it but should it be the main portion -I think maybe there should be other things taken into consideration and I think that the people in the inner-city schools should be prepared so that they can be able to get that knowledge

Right so maybe make sure they have higher grades in the sciences –

Yes

So that they're prepared for dental hygiene

Yeah

Because academics obviously played a role when you got in right?

Yeah when I got to college it was just a shock – I didn't have chemistry in high school at all – so I had to go through and take the main class I should have had in high school – I had to take that and if you're just thrown into chemistry on an advanced level it can be hard – you have to finish it within a couple weeks whereas if you take it in high school you have a whole year or 2.

Why do you think you were so successful in chemistry?

I just worked really hard – I had to work harder than the average person because I was behind so I really didn't have a life for a couple years but I got some tutors to help me – I probably (?) with chemistry right away so that wasn't bad but some of my math classes (?) so I had to get some tutors and different things like that so I guess I was kinda blessed – I'm someone who can just jump in and do that –

Right. Did you seek out the tutors or did someone in one of your classes suggest that?

Um I sought out the tutors – I was aware that the campus offered that service so I went there and I applied to see if I could get help – I kinda knew that I didn't know the stuff

Good for you – you have a lot of initiative you really do

My personality – if you don't have that it can be discouraging

If someone maybe didn't have good tutors in chemistry and they weren't able to get the grades to get into dental hygiene what other things do you think we should look at to get more diversity in our applicants –

Um that's a good question – maybe if they have prior experience – like maybe if they were a dental assistant or a medical assistant also if they have decent grades in other areas – maybe it could be brought to their attention we could get you some tutoring – to help you bring these grade up in this area – we could consider you –

Did you have any anxiety about getting into the program with your grades or were you pretty confident –

I knew I had pretty good grades cause I focused really hard to aim for As and Bs but I still realized I was up against a lot of people so I did have a plan B – I was gonna go into radiology if I didn't get into the program –

Oh ok well that was smart that was smart having a backup plan-

In order to attract and recruit students to our program we have open houses, brochures, recruitment activities, campus tours -these are all things we do to attract students – what do you think of the effectiveness of these types of programs –

I think they're good um I'm not sure – how far out do you reach – do you reach beyond the campus or on campus

Mostly on campus

Ok I think probably if you reach beyond campus I don't know if you could like go to the high schools cause that's where you really start preparing to see what you want to do with your career – I know in high school we didn't really have anyone come – to present options that you could do with a career afterwards so it took me a while to decide I wanted to go back to college – cause I had no idea what I wanted to do – so that would be nice –

Yeah. Yeah. I think you're right I think that's a good time to reach high school students for that. You know how when you were in school we would always talk about accreditation? The American Dental Association accredits our program well for dental schools, part of their accreditation is that they have to achieve appropriate levels of diversity among the students, faculty and staff; they also have

to have a systemic and focused effort to attract and retain students, faculty and staff with diverse backgrounds and also evaluate what strategies they are using to improve the institutional climate for diversity. Talk to me about how you feel about mandating a policy like this to increase diversity

I think it's good that they have that – it's sad that they have to have it but – I think it's good they have it just in case someone is in the position to be unfair I think it kinda regulates things so that minorities kinda have an opportunity to get into something positions

And do you think if dental hygiene had something like this it would help to increase the amount of diversity in dental hygiene?

Yes I think it could possibly help –

Um hmm. Ok is there anything else you want to add about this topic or your career as a dental hygienist

Only thing is if you have something to regulate as far as wages – being paid fairly – I realize it something that's hush, hush but somebody might be getting paid more than -a person getting paid something else but I realize since you can't talk about the pay it's hard to prove that it's toward your race or just because of experience

Are you talking within the same dental office?

Yeah I found a lot of dental offices are kinda similar – so I wish we had something that would make it a little more open so that you would know I'm getting my fair wage –

Have you felt at times that you weren't getting a fair wage in the office that you're working in?

Yes

And have you tried to um inquire about it or say anything to the

Yes I did it's kinda so hard to at it – the race – just make sure you're right before you just -jump to conclusions so -it's hard to prove it so it's more like it's more like how you feel but I have gone to them and said is there a scale that you're going by -something that I would be able to monitor – if I have to have this test or is there a time limit – what are you using to do this? Oh it's just by experience – well what do you mean by experience? It's the amount of years that I should be in the race – every couple years or the amount of education I have then I should know -what is required of me so I could go back to school so I could have the proper education so it's never clear it's just like kinda closed in with experience and kinda push you to the side and I think that's what makes you feel like ok is it my race?

Right. You know that's interesting cause I've worked in a lot of dental offices and you're correct – a lot of times there isn't a set – well you've been here 3 years so you

get this amount – you’ve been here 4 years – you get this amount -we never talk about how much anyone made –

Right.

I’m glad you had the confidence to go and talk to them about it just so at least they’re aware that there is some type of discrepancy

Yes

That’s good on your part – so is there anything else you want to add -do you have any questions for me –

Um yeah if that’s happening to me if you know if there’s anywhere I can go to investigate

Oh boy – I’m gonna have to think on that – I really don’t

Ok

I would think that maybe talking with some other African American hygienists – um have you gotten to know any in the Columbus area?

Yeah I know some hygienists but they’re not African American

Oh ok so that’s hard cause you’re kinda on your own in that respect

Yep

But if I hear of anything or if I have any suggestions for you I will definitely let you know

Thank you I appreciate that

Transcript #6

Ok so you agree that I can tape record our conversation today right?

Yes.

Alright so tell me what your first recollection was when you decided to become a dental hygienist

My first like thought

Yeah – how old were you what gave you the idea to

Oh. Oh.

To become a hygienist

I think I was probably 19 years old um I was already a dental assistant but I wanted to make more money and I knew the easiest transition would be to become a dental hygienist so that was the first thought

Well how'd you get into dental assisting?

Well I actually – my childhood dentist was an African American female and my grandma took me to her and she was talking about how important it was for me to see this dentist - and when I saw her- all my other doctors were White males – so that's when I kinda assumed but then I saw her and she was different and she was really nice – and um and when I was in high school they had a career center and so I went to her from maybe 4 to 18 and my career center had these different programs and one was dental assisting and I thought about her and always going to the dentist and I thought oh maybe I'll try this – and that's how it kinda worked out –

Did she say something to you that sort of interested you in the profession or did you just kinda look up to her?

I looked up to her and one year I was in high school and she kinda came to me and she said I think you'll be perfect for this program – it was honestly a summer program -at the dental school and it was competitive – you really had to write an essay to get in – um you had to have a certain GPA – but it was for African American females to introduce them to dentistry and she said she thought it would be good for me – she said she would talk to the director – her name is K...B(?) she's also an African American female – and she said they would wait for me to get my application in – so I did that program that summer – you got paid – it was a really nice program so that was when she introduced me to it and from there I went on to the career center and so that's how I kinda got into it

Yeah. And what was the experience like when you were there at Ohio State

It was fun – you kinda followed the dental students around and saw what their day looked like – we also took some courses – we learned basic dentistry like the teeth numberings

we learned about (?) about all the procedures about assisting we did a lot of lab work it was a fun experience

So do you think – do you kinda think that female dentist was a mentor for you did she stay in contact with you

Yeah. At the time going from probably high school she was a mentor -we didn't keep contact after that –

Um hmm. Do you think your career would have taken a different turn if she wasn't in your life or you hadn't met her?

Oh definitely – I would have never thought of dentistry had I not met her

Um hmm. Yeah that's interesting because a lot of people have said to me that they've had a mentor or someone in the field of dentistry that has interested them in the field and sort of helped them pique an interest in dentistry -so then my next question is how did you make the decision to attend YSU

Honestly what I did was – I knew I wanted to be a hygienist and I'd heard that getting into different schools was competitive so I was Columbus State for the basic prereqs and I heard you needed to take – it was easier to get into the hygiene school once you took all the basic courses so what I did was I sat down and looked at every school in Ohio that offered dental hygiene and I wrote out – I looked at all the courses you had to take and I compared which schools had similar courses so then I eliminated the schools that had additional courses and that didn't transfer – so I did that and YSU was actually one of them and once I got done with all the basic courses and prerequisites I applied to every school from that list and YSU just happened to be the one that accepted me first and I actually got into Cuyahoga County

Yeah Tri-State

But I had to wait a year -and Youngstown sent me this and said ok you can come this year – so I decided on Youngstown

Right ok even though you were from Columbus so that was gonna be a pretty big decision

Yes

To move – so getting back to you were working as a dental assistant did the dentist you were working for encourage you to go into hygiene or was it more your own initiative?

It was my own initiative – I had – we discussed it and talked about it he's actually the one I work for now -and he encouraged it and um so yes he said when you're done – you'll have a place here

But that was a good decision cause you had to leave your job with him for at least 2 years correct?

Yeah I was gone 4 years

Oh you were gone for 4 years

Yes. I left for 2 years and he wasn't ready for me when I graduated and then 2 years later he was ready –

Did you stay in Youngstown and work at all after you graduated?

I didn't stay and work in Youngstown I stayed for I think 2 courses for my bachelor's cause the reqs I could do online so I stayed that summer um -I did work for a dentist in Youngstown but it was just a summer job

Ok more of a temporary?

It was temporary and it was an assisting position it wasn't a

Oh an actual hygiene position? Right so tell me about your experience as a dental hygienist today

My experience – it's been 2 years – I have some private practice experience – which is pretty basic you go in and sit with a patient for 45minutes and educate them and I've done some clinical type work which I feel is a little more fulfilling because sometimes you're giving people a toothbrush for the first time and they're so happy

What type of clinic do you work at

It was a clinic that accepted government insurance and in that area we had a lot of people who came from Nepali – is it called Nepali – it's a country near India [Nepal]? So there were a lot of people oral hygiene was just new to them so that was a good experience I did some volunteer work at the Columbus Health Department so did that answer your question?

Yeah that's something different – yeah. I guess I just wondered things like is your career what you thought it would be are you happy as a dental hygienist

Oh that type of question um it is what I thought it would be am I happy – honestly not really

No?

Not because – it can be kinda boring at times sometimes you feel like in private practice to me you're not reaching the people – the clinic type way I definitely felt like I was reaching and helping people – but just in a practice it's kinda boring -I don't go to work miserable but I'm not fulfilled –

Right. Tell me more about that when you say it doesn't feel like you're reaching people

Um I feel like in a private practice you come in and you have this person you see every 6 months and every 6 months they have this plaque on their teeth or whatever the case is and you tell them to do it and how to do it and they'll – and sometimes they say in the chair – I'm not gonna do it that's ok –

They want you to do it

Exactly that's what I'm paying you for

Oh I can remember that um tell about some of the challenges you face in your two years of your career

Um challenges I've faced- this is hard just anything?

I guess some people have answered that they haven't been able to find a full time job or they don't have enough time to work on their patients those are some of the challenges that hygienists face I mean yours sounds like you were able to walk right into a position so you didn't have that challenge to find employment like some do and having to find benefits are you working full time do you have benefits

I work Monday through Thursday – I do salary so it's supposedly 32 hours a week but I'm only working maybe 30 -32 hours a week – I just got retirement for it but I did have retirement from my other job I do have vacation I have like 2 weeks' vacation oh I do have health insurance

That's nice

I think he pays half of it as far as benefits and pay it's not a big issue for example he just told me he's going out of town for a week and this isn't all of a sudden and already I worked 3 days just subbing cause he's gone and he didn't tell me so it's not like it just got here and I'm stuck no- there's a lot of dentists here in Columbus so that wouldn't be a hard thing sometimes I feel like I'm not good or great at determining what a patient needs sometimes I feel like I rely more on the doctor and I don't really like that – sometimes I'm comfortable with talking to him sometimes I feel like am I getting through to him? And I guess another thing would be so I guess my confidence as far as education or like hey you need scaling of your roof lining or you need some periodontist – so sometimes making that decision is difficult but my doctors the ones I've worked for have been good about helping me with that –

And do you think that maybe sometimes some of that comes with experience the longer you've been somewhere?

Yeah I think a lot comes with experience

Yeah that was hard I used to sub a lot in offices and that was always a hard thing find out how different dentists prioritize their patients and how they treat different situations -um when you talk to some of your colleagues or former classmates about dental hygiene how do their experiences compare to yours

Well most of my colleagues don't have the background that I do they might not have insight on dentists and the practice and how it works -for example I have 1 colleague and she's a friend and a little younger than me she's kinda that queen hygienist she feels like an assistant can't talk to her in a certain way or she should be making this much money or she should be getting this and I guess I kinda understand how dentistry works and so she kinda looks at different stuff like negative or like she can talk to a doctor in a certain way – so

And you think it might be because you said you had the experience – you have a different background because you've been in the assistant role –

So I guess I'm a little more humble –

I started out as an assistant too

From that perspective I don't mind the dentist or the assistant telling me what to do or taking out trash or cleaning the toilet so I guess that's the only back and forth I had with a colleague

Um has your experience either influenced or not influenced you to encourage others to become dental hygienists

It has influenced me to encourage others to become a dental hygienist or who don't feel like they know what they want to do or may feel like they want to do nursing or something – I feel like hygiene you do your job and you can home -you don't bring it with you – I think it's a good career you know

If a patient comes in a young woman or man and says they would like to go into dental hygiene you feel like you would encourage them?

Yes I have encouraged them even a mother she was talking about her daughter and I told her everything she asked everything I told her how much school was how much you make how hard it was to get in – and the courses – I do encourage people

I want to switch gears a little bit here um in 2013-2014 in all of the dental hygiene schools in the US and there's about 334 accredited dental hygiene programs – a total of 4.3% were Black, 11.5% were Hispanic, .6% were Indian, and 71.7% were White/Caucasian dental hygiene students enrolled in these programs what do these statistics mean to you about the profession of dental hygiene?

Those statistics kinda put a light on what I already knew – I do know that this field is predominantly Caucasian dominated I guess I knew that already but I don't know could you read the question again?

I was just asking what do these statistics mean to you about the profession so does it surprise you so you think it's a major issue how did you reach the conclusion you did about this and why do you think this is so?

Oh ok so it doesn't surprise me – I knew and you said how do I feel about it

Yeah why do you think these statistics are like that

I remember in community college – if I'm talking too much you can tell me

No not at all – that's what I want you to do

I feel like in the community dental – I'll never forget this – the community dental course Ms. ? taught?

Yes when you went out to the prison and St. E's

Yes. Yes, we did a lot in that course and she – I was the only African American student - and I know she was just giving statistics but she kept saying that African American and other minorities were most likely to have untreated decay most likely never to have gone to the dentist and most likely – you know those type of things – and she kept saying it and she was saying it because education socioeconomic status poverty – all the reasons and I felt – I just hated it cause I felt like I was the only one and then she would say so why are there so few of these people and someone raised their hand and said lack of education -and I don't know I'll just never forget that – I remember calling a Black dentist I knew and telling him all about it and how I felt about it but after working in the clinic and being in the field just the African American as a race – I guess we are less likely to go to the dentist or to be less educated as let's say Caucasian – I feel like even my mom-she never went to the dentist when she was a kid but I don't know why – my grandmother was the one that took me I don't think my mom- I mean my mom had a good job she has dental insurance – I think as a whole the African Americans are just less likely to go to the dentist or whatever –

So when that instructor was saying those things how did that really make you feel

Not all of us it's not what she was saying but I was like my dentist is Black I've worked for 3 4 5 Black doctors I've seen that's it's not all of us which I know that's not what she was saying but to hear it over and over and over and to be the only one in the class- are people looking at me

Right and that's one of the reasons I started to look into this further was – I want our faculty to be more aware have that cultural awareness I want the rest of our students to have that cultural awareness because you are one of only a few Black students that have ever gone through our program so maybe we can do something to get more minorities into our program – I think it would help all around – um one of the things that when we recruit students for the dental hygiene program at YSU and most other programs is we look at high GPAs so academics are looked at as the

number one thing when we recruit students or ACTs or SATs; what role did those academics play when you were accepted into the program?

I think they played an important role because before I started the hygiene program I heard all these different things – one of them was about getting high scores in certain classes and an overall GPA and so my goal was to get a B or better in all those classes and then if I didn't I would take it over until I got a B cause I had heard they look at the scores in especially one of the schools I was going to so I did it for that school especially too so I just knew it was important and I think I had a pretty good high GPA

How do feel about using academics as one of the high criteria for getting into a dental hygiene program

I feel like it is good because of the way the program is set up – the whole grade scale – it's not a typical 90-100 is an A -so I think it kinda prepared you to already doing well in these courses and I just think it prepares you to do well

Do you think there are any other qualities or factors that should be considered when accepting students into the program –

Other factors I think maybe how they are ready as far as how many courses they've already taken maybe if there's like an essay – or I don't know if you guys required it or not –

No we didn't -the only thing you had to do was observe – do shadowing hours

Yes yours was a pretty easy – it was one of the easiest I thought – application to get in and everything maybe with a essay – uh I don't know

So we do things like open house programs, brochures, campus tours, recruitment personnel -these are all different recruitment events we use to attract students to the dental hygiene program -what do you think of the effectiveness of these techniques to get people interested in hygiene

The techniques are good – the thing about hygiene is that you touched on earlier – first of all the average person does not know what a hygienist is – they get us mixed up with assistants with dentists so I'm usually impressed when someone knows or says oh you're a dental hygienist or they know what you do -most people get into dentistry because of a mentor everybody I know was a hygienist was because of somebody they knew was a hygienist so unless the person already sort of knows what it is those things just aren't effective –

It's almost like we have an image problem –

Maybe – yes -like I said some people don't even go to the dentist

That's true – do you have any examples of any of these recruitments you took part in –

No I never took part in –

It sounds like you took the initiative to seek out the program

And I've been to a dental hygiene open house but it was after I already knew it was what I wanted to do

Right ok um the next thing I wanted to mention to you was – do you know in dental hygiene how we talked about our accreditation standards – so the ADA gives us our accreditation and it's based on certain requirements we have to do – well for dental schools their dental accreditation feels strongly about diversity and so dental schools have to achieve appropriate levels of diversity among students, faculty and staff they have to show they are engaging in on-going systemic and focused efforts to attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds they also have to evaluate these comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity – talk to me about how you feel about them mandating policies to increase diversity –

Um I feel like it would be a good thing – because I feel in this field we do need more diversity also sometimes a person of a minority can feel intimidated when they're the only person you know there's nobody in the office – there's no instructors cause sometimes you just feel as a minority – you feel more comfortable – I do not want to sound offensive – but sometimes when you see in a world so big that doesn't look like you – and sometimes if you're in a small place and there's someone who looks like you it's like ok – I don't know it's kinda weird – but like when I first walked into the classroom – I was the last one – and I remember I walked in and looked around and there was no one who remotely looked- even if there was an Indian or a – just someone else who came from a different cultural – my heart dropped – no I don't wanna be the only one – but you said my name and you said hi and smiled – you made me feel a lot better – I remember because you did the attendance – so I think it is important- when I walked in I was like no – cause then I'll be labeled

Right – she's the Black student –

Yeah I'm the Black girl I'm sure that's what I was and probably the mean Black girl cause that's how people are sometimes -so I know I would have felt better had there been faculty or – like [REDACTED] – I kinda felt close to her cause she was different – and I will say this – nobody at least none of the faculty or program director made me feel different for being Black -so I will say that –

It's funny you say that because I didn't think of you – when we had Black students I never think of them as being different but it was you at the end of the program you did so well – and were so accomplished – and were just and in the beginning you seemed very shy – and I thought ooh I don't know if she's gonna make it - if she's gonna be able to come out of her shell – and I was so impressed with how you did through the program – and you never told me that you felt that way – that you felt

like oh my gosh I'm the only one -and yet I kinda thought wow how do you do that – when you are the only one and rise above that –

Yes. Yes. Yes.

So - you just have a lot of maturity about you [REDACTED] –

Thank you

And you just worked hard

Thank you

And I would hope wherever you go people treat you that way

Thank you

But one thing you did that made me realize when I said your name and said welcome it made me realize how important words are

Yes cause you could have been well you're late – but you actually smiled at me – and I thought maybe this won't be so bad – and I kept telling my mom I hope I'm not the only Black one – I don't wanna be the only Black one – maybe if there was an instructor it would be like – maybe she would say you can do it

Right. Right, I'm glad you felt that through the program you had the encouragement plus you have the personality you make friends easily -you had kinda your core group of friends throughout the program I think that helped too

Definitely yes

Ok so that's pretty much what I wanted to talk to you about – I really just wanted to hear about your experience because after I started studying this I found out that other people have already researched this – but the one thing they haven't done is actually talked personally to dental hygienists of diversity asking them basically how they feel -and giving them a voice -so that's why I'm doing these interviews so I just wanted to ask you is there anything else you would like to add before we end –

Yes – just 2 things – it'll be quick

Take your time –

Ok there is a association for African American hygienists and I went to the conference cause they gave me a scholarship so I felt like let me go to at least one since they did give me – and it was very inspirational to see someone who looked like you – it was just people like you and me – there were educators there were people with master's degrees there were hygienists with doctor's degrees and that was a good experience to see that- you don't have to be a hygienist you can do anything or be anything – so that was a good connection and I made a friend there and we still keep in contact and then I just wanted to tell you personally you know I'm in the public health program so I'll be learning a lot

about grant writing and implementing programs and what not – and 1 thing I do want to do is to do a program that follows students in high school – well African American females and kinda prepares them for hygiene school – with some of the science classes – preparing them for hygiene school but a 10th grade base -pushing them into the direction and what courses they should be taking – and introducing them into the field -helping them with college applications like even maybe paying for it if they can't afford it – scholarships with them – just something I wanted to do – like nobody helped me – sat me down and looked at all these schools and what schools should I go to – I did that on my own -so I wanna help some other African American student – do that so it's funny that you called me and asked me to do this – it is something I wanna do

That would be wonderful even if you could – I know you're living in Columbus but even if you could come back to the Youngstown area to talk to students -to help our program – that would be wonderful cause you said it before most of the people you know that are in hygiene had a mentor – like my dad was a dentist – I don't think I would have ever gotten into dental hygiene if I didn't know someone so -somehow we need to get in and make those connections – and if they don't have family members who aren't going to the dentist how are they ever going to know about – I've been a dental hygienist for over 30 years and still people don't understand what I do

That's true

Really no I am not an assistant –

Right and I'm not a doctor – my friend thinks I'm a doctor – it's funny – but I sub a lot and I'll go to a place and I'll be the only one – it'll be all Caucasian office – and some will welcome me with open arms – and then I've been in an office where and I'm an introvert – I'm not the friendliest bubbly person in the world and I walk in and everybody's walks right past me and I'm standing there for 10 minutes trying to introduce myself – and I don't know if it's a Black thing but sometimes I feel it's because I'm Black – I don't get an attitude but I feel like I don't want to be treated and we've had these conversations before about

Right

So sometimes we can be intimidated – to go places and I'm the only Black -or somebody will come up to me and ask are you the assistant and why would you ask when you know you don't need an assistant today – you guys called for a hygienist so I just assumed- and I'm not this angry Black – it's the world we live in

Yep I hear you and I've heard others too in fact – do you have anything else you want to add before I turn off the recorder?

Transcript #7

I just want to ask you if it's OK if we tape record this interview.

That's fine.

Alright, so where I wanted to start first was I wanted you to tell me your very first recollection of when you decided to become a dental hygienist.

OK, so I was um in High school and I went to Fort Hayes which is like a career center in Columbus, just as a tour an orientation tour they were trying to recruit students for their different trades so I talked to the dental assistant in instructor and she's like what do you want to go to school for and all my aunts and my mom they are RN's they're nurses oh I want to be a nurse so I'm probably going to look at the medical assisting booth, no be a dental assistant and be a dental hygienist and I said why and she said dental assistants and dental hygienists they make pretty good money they don't work holidays they don't work long hours you can go in two years not four and she tried to sell me on dental hygiene and it worked and it's the same program [REDACTED] went through in high school and I was like OK dental assisting is cool, it was easy I was good at it it came very easily for me and I was like OK, I guess I can go ahead and be a hygienist, but I can say I got involved for the wrong reasons it wasn't because I had a passion for it or because someone in my family did it or I was really interested in in it it was for all the wrong reasons honestly, money vacations and things like that um yeah, high school

Um so who encouraged you did you have a certain person in your family or in the program who encouraged you?

um so not really I mean so in high school so in this program um my instructor got me set up with [REDACTED] she is um one of just a few African American dentists at Ohio state and she is the coordinator and um director of a program called the Ohio project and so the Ohio project um was basically targeted at minorities um and it was trying to get minorities to become interested in um dental careers whether it was being a dentist or dental hygienist or just remaining an assistant and so it was a summer program we went to Ohio state we assisted the dental students we poured up impressions we did molds we observed at different offices and so I guess if I had to pick one person it would probably be Dr. [REDACTED] um because we kept in close touch with each other but Um, I had a lot of exposure to dentistry in high school I actually worked as an assistant in high school and so I had a good mentor she was also a dental hygienist um and she followed me through hygiene too so, I think those two women um motivated me.

Yep, Do you think that you would be where you are in your career if you, if those people hadn't encouraged you?

Yeah.

OK, laughs because you were...

I mean, it was it was beneficial, but um I'd a done it anyway.

Right.

I don't have...the perfect answer for that.

That's OK, Some people have said that there was one person that really influenced them and they wouldn't have been in dental hygiene if not for that one person. It kind of sounds like that's not the case with you.

No they were kind of they were on hand. Hey send me an update if something was going on I can't get this instrument, can you help me , can you help me get a different way, can I meet up with you. Can you show me how to angle this 204S it's when something went wrong I would reach out. And they would keep me going. You know, if I was struggling, but, no, I'd a still been alright.

So then tell me about how you actually got into dental hygiene school and what school you went to and how you picked that school.

So that's funny, because I graduated from Ohio State and I didn't even apply to Ohio state when I was in the process of picking a school and I decided to do UC or the University of Louisville and I got accepted into both so Louisville they were not really willing to give me any money as far as tuition and grants and things like that and I was on the waiting list for UC so my mon was like why don't you just apply to Ohio State and see what they give you as far as money, so I applied to Ohio State and they covered all my tuition and I was like OK, Ohio state is probably the better option because before Youngstown State offered a bachelors in dental hygiene Ohio state was the only school in Ohio that offered it. I may as well go ahead and do the bachelor thing, stop being lazy, it's funny because the year I applied to hygiene at Ohio state um while I was waiting for their approval or for them to decline me UC went ahead and accepted me um for the following year It's actually funny because I was like if I had gone to UC I would have been there four years and only got my associate degree so I went through Ohio State that I did the bachelor thing, it was closer to home, they paid more of my tuition um. What was the other part of that question? That was like a three part question.

I was just asking you how you went from assisting, how you applied to Ohio stateI think you pretty much answered it.

Honestly I knew I was going to get in to get into Ohio State, I'm black, they need diversity, I had great grades I had a lot of exposure I worked my first few years, I went to

that Ohio Project which was run by Ohio State. I had a lot of exposure. The offices I worked at those dentists they graduated from Ohio State. They gave me good referrals and references. I knew I felt very confident about Ohio State.

It sounds like that whole program, did they call that a pipeline program?

Yeah, it was.

Just so you know I went to Ohio State too.

Hey.

I did, quite a while ago. I bet some of the same instructors are still there. In fact, Mrs. [REDACTED] the director was a classmate of mine.

She is awesome.

Yep, she's something else. Alright, let me ask you another thing. Tell me a little bit about your experience as a dental hygienist today. How do you feel about your career is it what you thought it would be?

No, it's not to be honest. If I had known what I know now probably wouldn't have been as eager to get into dental hygiene um it wasn't hard for me to find a job I actually found a job like within a month, I was just subbing, I wanted to go to front offices to see what I liked and what I didn't like and after one of my subbing shifts my boss put me through all this and said are you working somewhere could you come and work for me a couple days a week. Dental hygiene is cool because you get holidays off and you don't really work crazy hours um but benefit packages suck um I actually work at two different offices because it was hard for me to find a full time job because I actually had been looking for a full time job because of the fact that I don't get any benefits even the full time jobs don't all offer benefits like 401K and medical insurance and vacation or paid holidays and um and I compare that to nursing I'm like my mom works 3 days a week, you know, she gets holiday pay, we're all covered under her insurance I think it's has a better long term yeah, I mean, hygiene's cool, but I think I would have thought twice about it because it's not exactly what it's cracked up to be. We're depending on patients and if patients don't come through I don't milk my dentists clock, I'll just leave ...an hour. It's different. It's not as easy as I had imagined. I will say I worked at 2 different offices in two different years I learned a lot I used Dentrax, Eagle soft and Softdent in two years. They keep switching. One of the offices I work at he is fairly new dentist this is his first practice I was the first person he hired, so I learned a lot about the business side. The other office I work in has been around for 35 years, and I teach them hygiene and I go wow I didn't know you could do that. I'm experienced because I'm here and there and I'm seeing different office styles.

When did you graduate from hygiene school?

2014

OK, alright. So, I've heard that from other people sometimes it's hard to find that full time position right away, you and as long as I've been a hygienist it's always been the issue. You have to work in a couple of offices and wait until something opens up.

That's the thing I actually spoke to one of my doctors about it. They kind of just broke it down in a way. It kind of made sense. Dentists are small business owners and small business owners can't afford to offer those things to their employees and the sad thing about dental hygiene is that a good office doesn't really have a high turnover rate so you get a hygienist that you like and you keep her there for 20 you keep her there. You can't hire anyone else, you have what you. You know, they start building rapport and they stay around so, um, yeah it's but you know honestly I work a lot I work 6 days a week.

Wow, that's a lot

It is, so it's hard for me to really I haven't been the best um at looking right because it's hard for me I can't take off work because I don't have time off, so it's hard to schedule working interviews or drop off a resume because I'm busy.

You have to wait til the dentist goes on vacation or something. Do you have to pay for your own health insurance right now?

Right now, no because my mom. I'm only 24.

You're still on your moms that's nice.

Yeah it is.

Um, when you talk to some of your colleagues about dental hygiene how do their experiences compare to yours?

Um, so honestly, there were 28 of us in my graduating class. I'd say about 6 of them have full time jobs that they love as hygienists. Another 6 are working full time as EFDA's not even, maybe using hygiene once a day.

Wow.

The remainder of us are between offices, right, working at two different offices or subbing, working maybe three days a week and subbing the rest of it, in fact, one of my colleagues, we were talking we hadn't talked in a while and she's like I' thinking about a career change?

Already?

Already. Yeah, so I mean we're all kind of different, we're spread out we're not all in Ohio and not all in Columbus so um yeah, we're all kind of different.

Now the dentist that you're working for, do they have diverse backgrounds. Are they African American dentists?

Well, one office no, there's two doctor practice and they're both white and most of the co-workers are white too but the um the newer office I work at he's actually Indian and um we actually have a lot of Hispanic so there are three assistants and they're Hispanic and there's one chick up front and she's Hispanic and actually we see a lot of Mexican patients and there's maybe well there was one white guy. Our office manager was white but he's gone. The rest of us are biracial or black, so that place is really diverse.

I'm having a hard time hearing you, could you be covering up the microphone?

I was...is it better now?

Yes, that sounds a lot better, so you talked to me a little about how you feel about dental hygiene. Would you if you someone came to you and asked you about a career in dental hygiene would you encourage them or not encourage them

Um, I actually just had a college student observe me um two weeks ago and she asks me why I got into it and if I liked it and basically asking me if I would encourage her to go on. I encouraged her but I did tell her all the things that bothered me about it. I honestly think that dental hygiene at least for me it would be more rewarding if I were married and I had kids but it's tough as a single person because I don't have any help I have a lot of bills I have some student loan debt but the hours are good for people who have families and you know to me hygiene is burning working six days a week is hard on my back hard on my body. I would recommend hygiene for someone with a family, someone who can work 3 days a week, 4 days a week, spend time with their families, I think that um I think it's nice, I think it depends on where they're at. You got places like Oregon who they are like in desperate need for dental hygienists. They're population is low when it comes to dental hygienists and they're paying almost 100,000 dollars year, you know then you have places like Florida that are over populated with dental hygienists. I would never recommend that if you're moving. I think it just depends on the person, but I mean, I know this might sound negative. I love dental hygiene. I wouldn't still be doing it if I absolutely hated it. I could easily go back to school, um, I just think it's probably I wouldn't go into it with very high hopes, that's what I think.

Yeah, I think it is hard for a single person like yourself. I think you're right. Working 6 days a week is tough.

Yeah, it makes you burned out.

Yeah, that is hard. Um, Ok One thing I wanted to talk to you about was in 2013-2014 there were a total of 4.3% black dental hygiene students, 11.5% Hispanic dental hygiene students, .6% Indian dental hygiene students and 71.7% white Caucasian dental hygienist students enrolled in the 334 accredited dental hygiene programs in the united states.

Is that right?

What does that mean to you about the profession of dental hygiene?

It's obviously not being advertised to African Americans, but like I said before African Americans are terrified of science, you don't see a whole lot of black scientists, black doctors because it's intimidating to our race.

Why is that?

I don't know, it could be the school systems, I really could not tell you, I know it's something I learned in my sociology something. I don't know. But it's intimidating. It wasn't to me, but I could see why some people struggle with it.

Did you feel that way in high school that students steered away from those courses?

Yes, that's why I blame the school systems because honestly I had one good science teacher out of 4 years of schooling and I absolutely hated science not because I didn't understand or I couldn't get it I just had to work really hard because I didn't understand a word my teachers were saying so I had to go home and read it myself and that took a lot of extra work.

Mmhmm.

My teachers were terrible in high school

Yep and when you're talking sciences

and I went to a Columbus city school.

Ok, chemistry, biology, those kinds of courses when you talk about the sciences?

Mmmhmm.

Yep, Um, well, so obviously there's not a lot of diversity in the profession like you mentioned before maybe they don't advertise for it enough they don't encourage enough students to get into the science classes um and some of the um things that we use to recruit students to dental hygiene are things like brochures, open house

programs, campus tours, um you know those are some of the kind of things we do for recruitment what do you think about the effectiveness of those things as far as getting more minorities into the profession?

I don't think that's enough um because how many people really look at the brochures oh that sounds about right. I could probably see myself doing that I think I mean I could be bias but I know that the Ohio Project was more than just a brochure, it was more than just a tour of Postle Hall it was hands on it was hands on it was hey I'm gonna throw you out there you know what I mean, it was more hands on and gave a better representation of the profession and so obviously it's not effective. The brochures and the campus tours aren't effective if there's only 4.3 African American students in dental hygiene schools.

that's sad and it's not really improved over the years either, so what you would you do if you were the director of a dental hygiene program at Youngstown where would you start where would you go to encourage more students to get into the profession?

I don't know, I knew that was coming, I tried to prepare for that in my head. I really don't I really don't know Um like I said I think it would be best if they had more exposure to it if they could see it instead of just hear about it

Like you did, like being in the pipeline. Let me ask you this, did most of the students that were in the pipeline program actually go into a dental career?

I don't know I've not kept in touch with them. the only one I do know, he did not, he did not. There were about ten of us, the other ones I have no idea, I have no idea what they done with themselves. It's been so long um

that sounds like a wonderful program though.

Something like that, even if you guys could arrange for a group of students to come just visit I don't' know how Youngstown State is set up if you actually have a clinic. Do you have a clinic? right. Maybe they could you could advertise this is there have a set day where students could come visit. I don't' know you definitely need to target them and let them see it cause that's what did it for me.

You know with dental schools um in when you were in dental hygiene you heard Mrs. [REDACTED] talk about accreditation and their program in order to be accredited had to do certain things. Well, for dental schools to be accredited they have certain standards they have to follow so dental schools have to achieve appropriate levels of diversity among its students, faculty and staff and this was since 2010. They also have to engage in ongoing focused efforts to attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and they also have to evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve an institutional climate for diversity so again these are

standards are for dental schools talk to me about how you feel about the idea of mandating policies like this to increase diversity.?

I think it's absolutely a good idea. I think it puts more pressure on universities and actually makes them go out and recruit African American and any minority group. I think it's awesome because if that weren't that the case I think 4.3 would be a lot more slim because they're not being targeted or pushed toward dentistry they're not going to do it. If a group of people are already afraid of something and then they're not being. No one's alleviating them, actually pretty rewarding, they'll find something else to do um and I think that's awesome. I think it's good. I know that's probably not that awesome for the university's because if they don't come up with that then they struggle. um, but for African Americans I think it's an awesome policy that's been put in place.

Do you think they should do this for dental hygiene schools?

Yeah

yeah

I know Ohio states a lot bigger than um Youngstown state but every year Ohio state manages one African American hygiene student when I was graduating when I was there we had one African American we had my senior year I was the African American and there was a biracial girl and the class beneath me there were two African American girls. I don't know how they manage that. I don't know they always manage it.

Right. Do you think that Ohio State sort of seeks out to have a minority student or do you think it's sort of how it happens?

I think they're population is big so one of those black people gotta want to do dental hygiene. I mean there's a lot of kids on that campus.

Laughs.

because I never had anyone seek me out. In fact, the the um

You almost didn't go there

yeah and once I was at Ohio state as a student I went and spoke with Oh I've been out of school too long... advisor the program advisor, she was mean she was so mean and intimidating it almost made me say, no I might just want to go somewhere else. I guess I'll be waiting on UC. it didn't place me away from the profession, but it did almost make me consider a different school.

Was she someone in dental hygiene a dental hygiene advisor or for the university.

She's not there anymore, but yeah, her name was Judith Goff. Do you know who that is? She was mean.

No I don't know her.

Could I get back to you, think about some things that would attract African Americans or any diverse students to dental hygiene.

Yes cause that's what I am writing my paper on because we don't have a mandate. The last thing I wanted to talk to you about, when we accept a class and when most dental hygiene programs in the state look at the number of students apply, the one criteria we look at is grade point average, you know, and we really don't look at race, um we don't look at whether you did community service whether you had a dental background, you know

Why?

Exactly. Why is that one of the reasons

Ohio State was like we need to see why you are well rounded why you are going to be a good representation to us after you graduate

I think we sort of have this idea that if you do well in your grades you're going well to do well through hygiene and you're going to pass your boards and that's where our main concern has been over the years. but I'm starting to wonder after talking to people if there are some other qualities we should look at. When you were accepted into dental hygiene, what role did academics play. Did you feel pressured to have a high grade point?

Yeah, absolutely because I mean they mentioned things like community service and they mentioned those things but they were not requirements.

Mmmhmm,

however, because they were mentioned I knew they were thought highly of I knew that that would be supplemental it would make me a better candidate but it was not a requirement, however, certain courses and certain grade point averages, um those things weren't requirements, yeah but I will say this, um my freshman year I had like a 3.7 then I started cutting up and my sophomore year of college which was the year I applied I only had like a 3.4. You supposed to have a 3.5 or 3.6 um to apply or to be considered. I didn't have that but I still applied. I had tons of experience in community service and tons of observations and I was a certified dental assistant. Those things helped me I think they made up for me not having the GPA that they wanted plus they probably thought she's a black girl. Not so bad, just being honest.

See at Youngstown state and some of the other programs we don't interview so you know we don't really know. I mean even as far as racial background, that's not on our application form that we look at.

Because it's not mandated

Right, right, it's not something that has been on our radar. We are happy when we have a student of diversity, but there's been nobody saying hey this is a good thing that you should increase your diversity

So, then why then are you writing to do that. I mean what is why if it's not mandated? Why do you care?

I guess, I've been teaching since 1990, so about 26 years now I have been teaching and it was actually [REDACTED] and I've told her this story before, [REDACTED] when she was a student in my class, she was very shy at first and through the two years she was in our program I really saw her blossom and when she finished the program it was the first time I looked around and thought to myself you're the only black student in this sea of white, this had to be hard, I don't know why I just thought to myself and I thought this must be really hard for you and we talked a little bit about it and one thing she told me was the first day she came in to class she was late, you know the first day and I was her instructor and I was her instructor and she looked around the room and realized she was going to be the only black student yep. and she said she was scared and I looked at her and I said welcome have a seat and she said that that made her feel so much better and relaxed. But you know what [REDACTED] I'm really not taking credit for that on any other given day I could have been late myself or I could have said to her we start at 8:00 in the morning and you need to be on time and it made me realize how important words are and how we treat students the minute they walk into our program.

Yep, I don't' know why it turned off.

[REDACTED] was actually just calling me, when I get an incoming call

it comes off. How funny. So, that's one of the reasons because I thought to myself I think our faculty have not had any experience dealing with diversity and also our students because if we only have one black student every three or four years our students don't understand different cultures or different things I just think it would make our program richer to have more diversity in our program and it's one of the goals of our university to increase diversity so that's how I got into this um topic and it's been really rewarding and interesting to study. So, I appreciate your time I don't' want to keep you any longer. Is there anything else you would like to add before we end?

you know what, I actually wrote a paper in the Ohio Project about the same thing I'm going to work on now how we can recruit more African American or more minorities and kind of sway them toward dentistry I'm going to try and find that paper and come up with some ideas and I'll e-mail you in a couple days if I come up with something.

that would be great. I'm open for ideas I could have interviewed a lot of other hygienists, but I thought who better to interview...

Minorities

Exactly, and no one has really done that and how has your career been and what are some good ideas for recruitment. Um, OK, I'm going to end the recorder, but I'm going to still talk to you a couple minutes.

Addendum: The interviewee e-mailed a few days later with these suggestions for recruitment:

1. Maybe you all could do more than talk to them about getting into dentistry/dental hygiene because of their race. Maybe you could show them statistics/numbers in regards to the poor oral health of their race. They may be more likely to act if they are aware of HOW it affects their people.
2. Offer some type of grant or tuition help for minority students. Getting help with some of my tuition would definitely motivate me to choose your program, as college is expensive and student loans aren't fun.
3. Provide minorities with post-graduation help, such as job placement. Ohio State didn't do that. I'd feel more comfortable picking a program if I knew that they would support and help me in my career.

Saying that dental hygiene lacks diversity isn't enough. Some kind of an incentive would attract more people. Hope this helps.

Transcript #8

OK, So I started the recorder, so can you just tell me that it's OK if we tape record our conversation?

Yes, it is OK.

OK, Alright, if you would tell me then um what was your first recollection when you decided to become a dental hygienist?

It was back in 2004 I started at a community college in 2002 so back in 2004 I started as part time and when I started I did not apply with the intention of doing dental hygiene. I've been a dental hygienist for 7 going on 8 years, in 2008 I graduated but when I started with the intention of going for nursing but given the fact that nursing and dental hygiene had the same prerequisites my first year applying for nursing um I did not get in. there was a hygiene __getting into the program um but at the same time I said to myself to increase my chances I would also apply for the dental program as well. If I didn't get in to nursing I might, what I did was I went into the dental clinic and I asked them to volunteer to make sure I like it, so I went in there I volunteered and I found out ooh dental is good, this is like almost the same thing like helping people because my passion was to you know in the health care industry. I said I kinda like this, then like you said I noticed that the demand for Africans but I am African if I didn't tell you that, the demand for nursing among African is really high, but I told myself if you are going for nursing if I get in to dental program that will be a good thing because not a lot of Africans usually want to do dental hygiene, but even if I went back home to serve I would be the 4th dental hygienist in my country because amongst my community everyone are going for factory pharmacy, nursing and stuff like that so anyway, long story short I went applied for nursing and dental and it happened that I got into dental hygiene so that's how I started in my career.

When you were little did you go to a dental hygienist, had you heard of dental hygienist before that?

Yes, I did, I did, I did go for dental cleaning regularly and I knew about a dental I knew about it but it wasn't something that was on my mind as a career.

So there wasn't really a person who said hey you should get into this profession, sounds like something you sought out.

Correct. The health field is more like once you have the passion to serve it's more like either nursing, dental and you choose to serve you serve. When I started dental hygiene I

knew there was a demand for for the industry ...so when I started I remember telling a couple of my professors that I'm gonna specifically work in the underserved community and uh the underprivileged and in my time of school I would go with some of my professors and volunteer for um like nursing homes, where they had you know...who couldn't make it to their dental offices. We would go to them to clean their teeth and give them quality dental care. Where I went to school in Minnesota, there's a very how can I put it, diverse state when it comes to dental hygiene...dental hygiene profession driven and I said this because you find more hygienists lobbying for the career for new things for new opportunities new degrees new job description for us and really really driven in the state of Minnesota, Yes. Now, when I got done in Minnesota, there were so many hygienists in Minnesota so the job market I graduate in 2008 the job market was flooded so I moved to Georgia the work was complete different experience for me. Complete different experience.

In what way?

The profession was more a little u I wouldn't say backwards but a little less opportunity because when I went to school in Minnesota I could anesthetize in Georgia you couldn't for hygienists you cannot anesthetize. ...dental assistants in Minnesota you can do sealants in Georgia you can't. They are a little further backward than I expected, but by the same time there were so many African Americans than because of the state Yeah, so there were more like where I work at [REDACTED] there were so many I think except for one were all African American

Are you still in Georgia?

No, currently I am in Columbus, Ohio – yeah currently work for [REDACTED]

Just getting back to what you said earlier in dental hygiene school you had a desire to serve in underserved communities tell me more about that where did that come from?

that choice happened when I was in the program in our program we had um people come in who needed ...dental care. We had people come in who didn't have dental insurance, we had people come in and just didn't have the money to pay for dental care and we had I heard so many stories so many experiences, the people we dealt with ...for 10, 15 years um some 5 years and especially kids among the children who didn't have the opportunity for insurance didn't have a clinic to go to. Not a lot of dentists that accepted the um state insurance um a lot of dentists at that time didn't want to accept insurance for whatever reasons so there were so many people flooding the clinic because we were the only clinic that would take them because you didn't use insurance, you used scale or free cleanings or on low scale or low payments. Come in for dentures and just so many the need was

just great. When we went to Give Kids a Smile or volunteer out there for the homeless the need was just there so with me wanting to serve in healthcare especially nursing. You know the need is there and my desire is there so I'm going to stick with this...my career always worked, you know in that environment when you serve Medicaid the underprivileged and I enjoy doing

It's really needed too. Sounds like your career is rewarding.

And it's needed.

Once you became a dental hygiene student and you know you wanted to work more in these communities did you happen to have a mentor or someone that encouraged you along the way?

For the most part, um for the most part, a few of my professors who also were serving in that community in that school in that community so they were my mentor because I would go with them, talk with them, since I started in the real world it has always been my job and just meeting patient after patient who needed dental care and who when you look back you are like I wish...clinic to serve this population. So now I am in the real world besides my offices my dentist my staff or my co-workers I never had an individual to be a mentor, like a one on one mentor it's always been my job that motivate me to stay in this.

So it sounds like your colleagues, your dentist your staff encouraged you, um when you were in dental hygiene um were you the only African American student in your class?

Um, let me think...yes, after I think about it, yes, I was. the class before me had two my class I was the only one

OK, what was that experience like?

Um, honestly, I didn't feel any different because I had awesome professors, awesome classmates, and I think what really helped me was the diversity there wasn't African Americans but the diversity was great, we had people from Russia, people from Korea, I had friends from India, my study... was from India um India and Africa are two different places but our cultures are almost the same. I had people from Vietnam, I had friends from Venezuela, friends from Mexico, Hispanic, they were all in the program, but there wasn't African American it wasn't like an African American in there, but definite diversity and it helped me a lot, and I didn't really feel any different.

That sounds like a good experience.

Yeah

Did you have some diversity in the faculty as well?

In the faculty um, no, not in the program. In the program they were all Caucasian American natives. Um part of my school where I did prerequisites there was African Americans but not in the dental hygiene program.

Could you tell me a little about your experience as a dental hygienist today? I mean you mention that you work in a um not necessarily a clinical setting but a setting where you serve a lot of people um you know in low income um is your what you thought it would be um has your career changed over time and also have you had any challenges in your career?

Um, for the most part it has not really changed um I have served um in this setting for like I said like seven years it is the same across the board from one state to the next, the demand is high so that's one of the challenging things that we see a lot of patients I think that will be probably my only um thought of this different from school versus the real world um each school I didn't think I would see as many patients as we see many patients we see during the day, but once you enjoy working in Columbus has always been the same experience close to like just for myself probably close to just for myself like 30 patients a day, yes 30 patients a day,

Wow in an 8-hour day? or is that a 10-hour day?

In the 8-hour day, in the 8-hour day and I work in a setting where we see more there are adults not a pediatric it's a general dentist office but we cater to more pediatrics a lot of children so which of that 30 probably 20 of them or may 26 or 25 of them will probably be kids between the ages of 6 months old to 20 years old.

Oh, OK that helps a little but that's still a lot of patients.

That's still a lot of patients but in my days like now in my work day I will probably see 2 adults but they at the most um two adults at most for an hour and I'm expected to work with children in probably a 30 minutes every 30 minutes, 20 minutes some of them like kids 2 years old 15-20 minutes no more. And that's my routine. I don't have to do x-rays like when when I'm worked in Georgia I had to do 20 minutes so that would be medical history, walking through x-ray, coming to hygiene, doing the cleaning, going back to do counseling whereas in Columbus excuse me I don't have to go through the whole appointment I have someone like a DA bring them back, do x-rays all I do is there are two other hygienists all we do is clean teeth and they do consults and stuff they do 30 patients a day and that help with assistant with fluoride, counsel, flipping chairs, um x-rays and medical history.

Right, Oh, that would help, I understand how that would help. Cause I know when I've worked in private practice, if you have an assistant you can see many more patients if you have someone helping with the x-rays and everything.

Yeah.

When you talk to some of your colleagues about dental hygiene, how do their experiences compare to yours?

Um, when I talk to some of my colleagues um that work in the same setting some of which did not expect when they started to work with some of the really didn't expect to see as many patients as we see serve as many people. some of them were shocked by what they see as far as the the the the kids that we on day to day basis. high chair restraints on a day to day basis more gingivitis more calculus to clean they didn't expect that so of course they're push were different as far as ...some of them just loved it some of them just felt like. Do it. sat it in worked in a..multitask on the other some people are like this is not my calling this is not for me I'd rather be in the private practice where I can see 8 patients a day 7 patients a day and I don't have to deal with all this I don't have to deal with the crying I don't have to deal with all this cleaning I don't have to yeah all the calculus and all the gingivitis I don't have to deal with the parents I don't have to deal with all the drama and all that it's just different from person to person for the most part um working with my colleagues we work together for 2 years so even with the complaints a lot of time you will be in that setting for a year or 2 and move on and look for something that they like.

Right. But you sound like you feel that is your calling to stay in that environment

Yea, it has to be a passion it has to be with that setting it has to be a passion if you don't have the passion for this that's not a place for you because it's not about the money most of the community that I'm working it's not about the money because the hygienists are underpaid in that setting. So, you'll be underpaid and you're working more and more you'll see more patients than you would normally see in private practice and being underpaid, but it's not about the money, you know you're free at that point having passion to serve in health makes a different ...experience to one-time passion will be a lifetime memory for them and a lifetime experience for them, but one day this is how I take it. One day is the moment of a moment of a work stress. Maybe at that moment so my patients whatever I do to make it ...become a lifetime memory for them.

Right.

A lifetime memory, so you have to be passionate about what you do a...your attitude has to be pretty much passionate...

So where did you get this passion from was it a parent or were you raised this way tell me where you got this um passion for service?

Um I would say I wasn't I wouldn't say raised that way but from my community and from where I grew up I grew in a third world country which is Liberia um West Africa the smallest country in West Africa you can put your thumb on the map. It's a really small place and where I grew up I was just one of the fortunate ones that who had a parent would take me to get cleanings but a lot of my surroundings didn't have that opportunity and beside dental even medical is under people are underprivileged for medical from where I grew up so it's just my um where I grew up what I seen, um I think people. What I seen people have and what they don't have that just put me in that mindset of helping and my long term goal is to go back home one day and serve

Oh, wonderful. I hope you get to do that.

So, I think that's where my passion comes from for serving, it's just working in this is like working in a third world country you're. You know what ..so it's just underprivileged kids, underprivileged kids who have never seen dentist who teeth have never been checked, never been looked at. The only difference between the and here is the food, the diet p..a lot of teeth on that side in America where kids are privileged to have food everywhere that food everywhere drinking sodas eating more candy the kids on that side are eating from the soil so their teeth wouldn't be as bad as what you see here but at the same time, they would have that privilege to come to the dentist every day or every six months to have a cleaning.

Well, based on your experience, would you influence other people to become a dental hygienist?

Yes, because the need for hygienists there's there's there it's there depends on what side of the state and what side of the country you're at

have you ever encouraged people have people asked you about your profession and you've encouraged them to go into dental hygiene?

Yes many times, many times and I personally encourage people to..come into the medicare setting because the need is always there

Right.

And I wish I wish to be honest with I wish Columbus was on the same page as Ohio was on the same as Minnesota because Minnesota like I said there's a lot of lobbying for the profession A lot and these are stuff that you can

That's where they have the dental therapist and the advanced dental hygiene practitioner.

Yeah.

Yeah, they're a lot more progressive than Ohio is. Another thing I wanted to get your perspective on was in recent years there were a total of 4.3 % Black, 11.5 % Hispanic dental hygiene students, .6 % Indian and 71.7% white Caucasian students enrolled in the 334 accredited dental hygiene programs in the United states. What do these statistics mean to you about the profession of dental hygiene?

How many African Americans?

4.3%

Um, the only thing I can think of will be the profession of nursing being a competitive profession with dental hygiene um one thing with the human like human whole we tend to run to where other people are running and tend to go for after what another person is going for. A lot of times we tend to be followers like If I had 10 friends in nursing ...the first instinct would be I want to do it too. I want to do it too

Let me see if I understand what you are saying. You kind of feel that if a black person is interested in a health profession they are more likely to go to nursing rather than dental hygiene.

Yes, nursing, rather than dental hygiene, that's where it's coming from. I'm sure if we look at statistics from high school graduate who do not have a privilege at that time to going to a college right away the first thing they're going to go for CNA

(certified nurse assistant?)

That will be one of the first things an African American students will go for if they don't have that opportunity right away if they have the privilege to go to college for a profession. They will run for that because it's the easiest thing to get. ...finally you have the opportunities to go to college, the first thing you want to think about is nursing.

Oh OK.

Because that's where they started.

Right.

Working as a CAN or PC gradually go into the nursing area whereas in our profession we don't have anywhere to start, well if you start as dental assistant where most times dental assistant is quite recently a dental assistant is opened to probably train on your job or

come from high school and go to one of the skill colleges, it started probably a few years back that you could do that. But dental assistant has always been a 9-month degree.

Yep, it is some dental assistant were trained on the job but you can become a dental hygienist in a 9-month program too.

Yeah.

Um, I'm going to switch gears a little bit here, in dental hygiene programs when we accept students, usually the highest priority ...is students with a high grade point average or high standardized test scores such as an ACT or SAT score. When you think back when you were getting accepted into dental hygiene, what role did academics play when you got accepted.

It was based on my GPA at the time and that's what made the program competitive because when I applied to dental hygiene ... I did not have a previous degree. I applied to hygiene out of high school ...college and based on my GPA um I had a high GPA in sciences but my recollection was A's I did not get into hygiene even with the prerequisites that were requested I had to take extra sciences to build up my sciences and GPA to be able to enter the program, so by the time I got done with dental hygiene I was at 90 credits. I was almost at a bachelor degree ...for an associate degree so I had to do so many sciences to get into the program.. Because people I was competing with to get into the program were zoologist, botanist, some were changing a career, biologist, change their career.

Right, and um when you were in high school, did you not take some of those science courses that you needed?

No, because I went to high school in Africa so basically coming over here I had to start all over

Oh OK.

Yeah,

Oh, good, um another thing I wanted to ask you about was how we can recruit more diversity into our dental hygiene program so some of the things we use for recruitment are open house programs, um brochures, we have recruitment personnel, we do campus tours, um and these are some of the things we attract students to our program, what do you think about the effectiveness of these techniques?

I think you guys have...uh every tool that is necessary to attract diversity there's diversity other than African American right, but more things that can bring diversity is a lot of

education in those communities a lot of dental education how many times do we leave our jobs to go into those communities to educate that's a not a lot of times. Everybody is busy with their career. Only the schools are trying to do more promotion and more advertising of their career, but not a lot of times hygienist a profession a registered dental hygienist going to those communities educating and in my profession we education and educate at work but we do a lot of marketing out there we educate a lot of um uh a lot of uh schools a lot of schools preschools a lot of ...but out of my work I'm not part of any organizations or anything to go out there are do any further education other than work, so maybe establishing an organization might help to do more...more lobbying ..uh, education. The community more probably stimulate someone or help get up and tell kids I'm ready to go and get a degree and maybe I should go get a degree in dental hygiene.

Yes, I think those are some good suggestions. One of the things that dental schools, when you're in dental hygiene I'm sure you heard about dental hygiene and the program you graduate from was accredited meaning they had to do certain things to become accredited, so dental schools as part of their accreditation and this is since 2010 dental schools have to achieve appropriate levels of diversity among its students, faculty and staff um they also have to engage in ongoing focused efforts to attract and retain students faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and they also have to have institutional strategies to improve the climate for diversity. Tell me how you feel about the idea of mandating policies to increase diversity?

That would be positive, that would be a great idea, that would be a great idea in dental hygiene and I think by so doing that might even increase the chances and progression of you know establishing and expanding our profession ...in the state of Ohio

mmhmm, yep. Do you think it would increase the number of dental hygiene students?

I think it will. I think it sure will. ...because if the dental schools can do it, if the dental schools are doing it and we did I think that would help a whole lot

Yep, I do to. OK, so I wanted to, that was really all I have for the questions. I want to thank you. Is there anything else you would like to add on this topic before we end?

One of my suggestions and think that in in the State of Ohio increase the chances of mandating schools of dental hygiene for what you just told me like the dental schools do to create diversity I think if we increase lobbying in the state of Ohio it can extend our profession and our career in the state of Ohio but I'm that's not a lot of lobbying that goes on for our profession. Our profession is not progressive. I've done my research I've been to the dental assistants I've been to our organizations the ..dental hygiene association and

it's just not aggressive right and I think if it started at that point. If we start at that point... have a strong body because a lot of stuff that goes through senate is based on membership and how many people are petitioning for this and if you don't have somebody you know basically they're dead

Right. Somebody who's really fighting for you.

Yep, so maybe if people who reach out to the association and try to make it more strong than we can pick up from there.

yep, I agree. Ok I'm going to end the tape.

Transcript #9

So, I'm just going to ask you first of all is it OK if I digitally record our conversation this evening?

Oh, yes, recording is fine.

OK, alright so the first question I have for you is what was your first recollection of when you decided to become a dental hygienist?

First recollection of when I decided to be a dental hygienist I have to think because my main interest was dentistry, I wanted dentistry I just didn't know what. When did I figure out what probably in college undergraduate, undergrad I was trying to decide on dental school and becoming a dental hygienist and after my attempt at the DAT for dental school that's when I leaned more toward hygiene about my junior or senior year in undergrad?

OK and how did you actually get into thinking about dentistry?

I'm sorry I said that wrong I should say that my uh I had an interest in dentistry at a young age I remember as far back as fifth grade. My parents told me ... I did a project on teeth and dental specialties I always had an interest in science - health and teeth. When I did that project in fifth grade it was a great combination of all the things I like and aspired to work in this industry

Did you have a dental hygienist who inspired you?

Not at that time not yet um when I was young my dad introduced me to a dentist here in Columbus at a college fair that she was participating in and I started to shadow that dentist other dentists on that...that's what led me more to my desire to become a dental professional.

OK. Um so you didn't have um a particular person that encouraged that and told you to do that ...it was because of the science project that you became interested in the dental profession?

Yes yeah and I started to get more acquainted with the dental professionals and then I was meeting people and I did in the hygienist she's an attorney now and she encouraged me to pursue hygiene. actually she was a new hygienist herself and um so I think being friends with her has really helped me to get a lot of information on the inside scoop on what schooling was like and the studying the rigor of the program and things like that so um she was the encouragement to me.

OK. good.

As a hygienist just a little older than I was.

Right. OK. Um, how did you make the decision to attend the college you did and where did you go to dental hygiene school.

Well, the dental hygiene school that I attended was Lima Technical College, Rhodes State college now. But it's Lima tech and it shares a campus with OSU Lima and um when I applied to hygiene school I was at the University of Cincinnati (UC) I was there and I was a biology major and um that's why I remember incorrectly from before I had applied to hygiene school right out of high school my parents though, my father mostly was persuaded that I should go the dental school route um based on scholarship money and things that were gonna to be available to me if I did that. So, uh, he actually took me out of testing and the medical things getting ready for hygiene and um I went ahead and majored in biology to go to dental schools. And then like I said, I didn't have a lot of the requirements, the GPA and high grades science grades for dental school so sophomore year after a year of pursuing my bachelor's degree I changed my major and I was tired of this biology stuff and I wanted to learn about teeth. My father who was paying for my education told me so you started it you need to finish it meaning the bachelor of science so I had applied to Raymond Walters while I was there at UC and they did have a two year waiting list and I had a two years to graduate so I may as well finish it anyway I had to admit my father was right. So I continued and finished my bachelor's in biology. I was still on the waiting list at Raymond Walters so I started to apply to other schools and I applied to Shawnee State, I applied to Sinclair in Dayton, Lima Technical College, Columbus State which is where I'm from in Columbus was not yet accredited that was taking a little bit of time and I wanted to do this quickly so I applied and took the requirements for each school since I had graduated now and the school that I wanted to go to the least was the school that called me first.

Laughs.

Um Lima tech called me, um, I did get advanced standing on their waiting list because I was a dental assistant and um I believe a young lady got she became pregnant and she declined her spot and so they called me 6 weeks prior to the start of the program and I picked up everything and I moved to Lima right away

Oh good.

I got a job and an apartment.

When did you become a dental assistant?

I became a dental assistant in 1993 so I was about a junior in high school.

Oh OK

My family dentist I was doing a project um it was a project where I had to shadow a professional and I had to write a report and I just absolutely fell in love and I went to volunteer after that in the office and basically he hired me on and trained me and said general assistant opening came about where he needed someone at the front desk, so I was trained at the front desk, so I did insurance and while I was in college he put me in touch with two dentists so I could work while I was at UC as well and the I could come back to Columbus on weekends or breaks he just really helped to plug me in.

Would you consider him a mentor?

Definitely, definitely, he still is a mentor for me. As a teacher he is very supportive and on my advisory board for that program.

Are you teaching dental hygiene now?

I am not teaching dental hygiene yet. I am teaching dental assisting at a career center here in Columbus.

Yes, Good. So, you did have a mentor that kind of helped you through. Do you think you still would have gone into hygiene without that mentor?

Very supportive, he knows I was between hygiene and dentistry and he did encourage dentistry and um I just decided against that, I did like, I really liked the same room, the approach for hygiene I liked having the instruments seated and patient chair. Um, I just felt like dentists were very busy doing things that were very necessary but they didn't have that connection with the patient and that's something that I really like, being able to educate and inform and get to know my patients and after being around offices for many years I didn't see a lot of that at the time with the dentist patient relationship like I've noticed with the hygiene patient relationship.

Right, right. Can you tell me a little more about your career as a dental hygienist today?

Well, currently as a dental hygienist, right now I am teaching full time uh at the career center so I am teaching dental assisting students. I do work as a hygienist on weekends and for instance on Monday was Presidents day no school so I found myself in a dental office working, so I do work on breaks and some holidays as needed. Dental assisting is different from hygiene, but again I miss that patient interaction, I want to keep my skills up and I just can't see myself completely away from hygiene so I still do work and I have a clinical...instructor.

Is your career what you thought it would be when you went to dental hygiene school?

My career is actually more than what I thought it would be when I went to hygiene school. When I went to hygiene school I was inspired to become a teacher, um but I planned on teaching hygienists and I still do I'm working on my master's degree and I graduate in May. Yeah

I hope to also!

So my Master's degree is in technical education

Good.

And uh Thank You! I would love to use that to be able to get into teaching hygiene um I aspire to be the director of a hygiene program one day. I um, I really love the combination of education and hygiene

And clinical

I really want to teach to improve the dental professionals. Being a part of their education so I could better the profession by instructing quality hygiene.

Right. Yep, good for you. I hope you do get to teach dental hygiene students. It's very rewarding.

Yes, I think it would be.

Um, when you talk to some of your colleagues about dental hygiene um how do their experiences compare to yours?

Well, their experiences depends on who I'm talking to some have a very different experience especially when it comes to schooling. I'm the only African American student in my class um I can't remember now but they didn't have but a I can't remember if they had any that finished their program before me and that's something that I'm interested to find out now, the education and the path that lead me to dental hygiene some of my colleagues had ...It wasn't a good experience for me at first when I went to Lima in hygiene school with 99% being Caucasian female. There was one male Caucasian and he didn't complete the program. So after that we're down to 21 and I'm an African American. I did not have a good experience with my classmates. I was in Lima a small town. The students were from even smaller towns around there. They would tell me I've never seen a black person in real life or up close. They definitely told me that. they would ask questions about my race, my culture different things. Some were friendly some were not. We would do exercises, due dates in class, meet and greet, I would dread those,

we would meet the other students, people would shy away from me. I did make a couple of friends one of which I am still friends with now, but I was not well received, when I went to school there as I talked to colleagues they really didn't have that experience because they didn't go to you know schools that were on the outskirts. Most of my colleagues that I interact with here in Columbus they went to places like Ohio State, Columbus state or Sinclair that tend to be more women of color. so that was a big difference.

That had to be difficult.

It was difficult, but I was there to become a hygienist and nothing was going to deter me from that. Uh, it changed very quickly when they know who was answering questions in class and who the teachers made reference to doing a good job then they wanted to be on my team so to speak.

To study with you.

They wanted to study with me and friendships once they saw that I was one of the top students in our class.

But you had to prove yourself first Huh?

Yes, I guess I kinda did. I figured I didn't come here to make friends I came here to become a hygienist that's what I wanna do so I don't need the social aspect to do that so I was learning to be OK with it.

How did the faculty um respond to you?

I cannot say faculty responded to me any differently than the rest of the girls. I thought the mistreatment from my classmates but I cannot say that I got mistreated from faculty. I thought that was pretty fair and reasonable as far as how my instructors interacted with me

How did you overcome that?

I um I really just I called home a lot and I connected with my family and friends and I had a lot of studying to do so I just learned to live with it and like I mentioned there was one girl who kind of wasn't the most popular either and we formed a bond and we studied together eventually I started to relate and interact with my classmates better.

Yeah,

I would have to initiate conversation, interaction, but eventually they started to you know realize I was an OK person to be around. It wasn't like that the whole 2 years but maybe first quarter or so.

If you were to talk to other young people about becoming a dental hygienist would you influence them to go in to dental hygiene?

I do, I am a mentor, I have a few mentees that have become hygienists. I have a lot of students that come and ask about hygiene, they come to the dental assisting program with hopes of going into hygiene and I'm very excited by that and I encourage them to visit programs...to look into hygiene I always enter their questions and the benefits from being a hygienist and share things they may not realized or things they don't know come along with being a hygienist. I do encourage it a lot.

Well, you're in a really unique situation being in a dental assisting program to then feed students into the hygiene program.

Yes,

You're a great resource for the students.

Thank You. I hope to be and that's one of the things I look at is trying to get more minorities, more people of color both male and female into dentistry whether they are interested in hygiene or not I want to encourage them and plug them in to what they need to do to because I would say you have to learn about the profession and then put yourself around those people so I'll teach them about networking and taking advantage of different workshops and opportunities that the local colleges have and to learn more about it and around the people , how they interact, what do they talk about just being around them is a great encouragement and seeing people that look like you doing what you want to do lets you know that you can do it too.

mmhmm..That's good philosophy, good advice.

thank You.

In 2013-2014 there were a total of 4.3 black dental hygiene students, 11.5 Hispanic students, .6 Indian dental hygiene student and 71.17% white Caucasian students enrolled in the 334 accredited dental hygiene program in the US

Wow.

What do these statistics mean to you?

First of all it's very startling and disturbing because wow, just the underrepresentation considering the clients and the people that we serve, those numbers are very lopsided for lack of a better word. Wow, that's, I didn't know that. That's very shocking and that means to me we've got work to do. We've got work to do to get more people of color in this program they can do it and that's what I tell them. It's not easy. Hygiene school is

challenging, but it's doable. I did it and there are many others who can do it well, but again I just say we have to get out and talk to groups of students and people that are looking into health care occupations and let them see people that look like them doing these jobs.

Right, right. What suggestions do you have for recruiting more um minorities into the profession?

Well, I really am glad when you asked is my career what you thought it would be. I'm really glad I taught high school – it's not what I wanted to do. High school is a great platform to reach people to make these decisions and talk about the profession and spread the word. We need to get into I don't know if Youngstown has we have "I know I can" do you have anything like that in the high schools an organization that helps planning for college so have the workshops for parents and students

We have something similar.

We need to have hygienists there talking about now is the time after 10 or 11th grade getting things in line so you can be accepted into hygiene school. They need to know sooner than later already 18-19-20 years old because there are too many distractions there. I think we can plug in when they have a thirst for allied health profession, that's when we have to navigate and tap in. Church groups, different functions and students in the middle school and high school age range, you have to start younger. Some students find out about it when it's late and they realize they needed certain grades to get into the college program and they don't have them and they are like now I'm done, take some of those science classes over, get A's and Bs but by then they're already discouraged.

That takes me to the fact that most. Most dental hygiene programs look at high GPAs, ACTS, and SATS. How do you feel about that and did that play a factor when you were accepted into the program?

ACT scores- dental schools to become a dentist and promised me a scholarship if I were to go to main campus Raymond Walters for hygiene. Well, that's what I did come to find out my ACT scores were not high enough to get scholarship money. I wasn't a very good test taker then and I didn't perform well on the Act and it shut some doors for me. In undergraduate because I got my bachelor's degree before my- most people think I did that backwards ...associate second um but I did very well in school and you wouldn't have known that on the ACT score I had – does that make sense?

Yes it does

so to have doors shut because of it is very discouraging for people who are dedicated and headstrong about going where they want to go. You shut that door for a lot of people an

they're done. A lot of things to look at you get a well-rounded student ...a commitment you know reasonable grades and community involvement and leadership position and interview can they articulate can they express themselves can they explain why they want this career field. So a lot of different ways they can measure someone suitable to enter a hygiene program more so than just the ACT scores.

So what we do right now to attract students is we have open house programs we have recruitment events we have campus tours, um what do you think about the effectiveness of these types of programs for recruitment.

I think if its minorities who are attending those events those are very good ways to get them in um we need someone to speak truthfully about hygiene we had a hygienist and she's the director of the Columbus state program she was there talking to students a week ago and she had so much enthusiasm and she speaks about hygiene as a meaningful rewarding career and that's what we need to motivate people we don't just scrape teeth and do the same thing all day and we need to let people know that. We need to express how important the role of the hygienist is and how much you can do to reach people and really help them especially with the various connections between the oral and systemic links it's huge right now we got people listening now and they need to hear about what our profession can do and the influence we have on total body health so campus tours and all the different things that you just mentions and the way to get people to pay more attention to hygienists and what we're capable of I think it's great. A lot of people don't know the difference between a dental hygienist, the dental assistant and the dentist.

I know. I think we have a little bit of an image problem.

Yeah, that's true.

One thing that you may not know, you understand how accreditation works, well for dental school accreditation in 2010 they um revised one of their standards and I want to read to what that standard says, that in dental schools they have to achieve appropriate levels of diversity among their students, faculty and staff dental schools have to engage in ongoing focused efforts to attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and they have to systematically evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity. Talk to me about how you feel about the idea of mandating policies to increase diversity?

I knew you were going to say that. Cause I heard that about dental schools and um they need to have more of a balance and accept so many students of color and other races and I guess it's a shame that they have to have it mandated that they have to do it but we can definitely use it to our advantage so that we can get people in and into those spots and programs so if dental hygiene had the same mandate then that would be a great

opportunity to see a change in results as far as not just women but people of color to be able to have a chance in a dental hygiene program so I think it could be beneficial.

Yeah, it's something that I haven't seen in the dental hygiene standards, but maybe eventually that might be something we see down the line. I don't know.

You said that was 2011 for dental schools?

2010, so they've been trying to do that. So for some dental schools it's a real challenge if the dental school is located in an area that is very rural like maybe Lima where you went to school and there isn't a lot of diversity it becomes a real challenge for those school they have to draw from other areas of the country to get more diversity in those programs um so it does present some challenges but it is something all dental schools are showing they are making efforts toward that in their program.

Well, I think it's necessary to be able to get that diversity,

well that was all the questions that I wanted to talk with you about tonight. I appreciate all the valuable information. Is there anything else you would like to add about this topic before we end?

Well I'll just say that I was very curious to hear more about it because this is something I have noticed and I have taken a personal approach at trying to better and ended up being a motivational speaker to speak to some young ladies that are mentees of mine and encouraging them and telling them that this is something that you can do and they just need someone to believe in them and believe in themselves, that is something that I personally try to do, you know you don't have to be 4.0 student to be a great hygienist but you do have to be a student that's willing to work and I'm not smart enough and I tell them I'm not a smart person I'm not a naturally smart person I had a girl who we were in undergrad together she's Indian and she's gone on to become a dentist and we would sit by each other in many different classes, lectures and she would look at her nails and bopping one leg and just sitting there just listening and I'm taking all the notes, all the notes, everything, everything, and I go home after class and I'm rewriting my notes and flashcards and diagrams and she reviews the textbook a little and she aces her exams and I get Cs and I have never been able to figure it out, but that's someone to me that's naturally smart I'm smart enough to know that I have to work harder to get good grades.

I'm the say way, I'm the say way.

I'm not naturally smart but I'm smart enough to know that my learning style is one that involves going through all those repetition and to be successful and passing the tests and

board exams that's what I had to do and it's going to take some hard work so I have to tell people.... it's going to take a lot of work now so work hard now and play hard later.

You're a wonderful role model for young women.

Oh, thank you. I had wonderful role models and I still do in my life so I just have to pay it forward. [REDACTED]

I was just going to say that. Pay it forward. I think you have.

I have to end the tape but stay on the line for a minute.

Transcript #10

My first question for you is what was your first recollection when you decided to become a dental hygienist?

I believe it was my husband who first introduced the field to me. Just due to the fact that I um already had two and a half years of college years ago prior to having kids and basically I stayed home for quite a few years with the kids and when I was ready to go back to school to finish my degree I didn't want to start over and I didn't want to finish in education that's what I started out in but at the same time I didn't want to invest four more years so he introduced he just told me about dental hygiene I've been reading it's a good field, and honestly that's what introduced me to it and that's my first recollection of it.

Is he in the dental field?

No, he was a chemical engineer, yeah chemical that's what he graduated in now he works for himself he is basically big into real estate he is a general contractor he flips. This year alone we will probably flip like 15-18 homes and we have a ton of rentals so he's been doing that over the years so he solely doing that now working for himself. Yep.

So you didn't have um like a dental hygienist experience with a dental hygienist growing up?

Well, you know what when he told me about it I thought back when I used to visit the dentist and I did you know I would think about the hygienist and I'm like that does sound like something I would be interested in. I would think back to the dental hygienist I had had prior and I had and it didn't sound bad and I said I'll give it a try. Basically that's what it was.

Once you decided to go into dental hygiene did you have someone that you would consider a mentor? Could it be your husband or was there someone else in your family?

Honestly not really no, it was more so me just pushing myself through it just knowing that you know something I could do and I just wanted to get finished and succeed and not fail in it. No, I really didn't feel I had a mentor no, yeah.

OK, tell me a little bit about how to decided to go to YSU.

Well, let me think. Oh, you know what, when originally I moved to Ohio I transferred to Kent and I was actually going to finish my education degree when I first moved to Ohio and um basically I had already had my first son and I had Purdue University credits. Kent would not even take all of my credits. So that was one of the reasons why I

wouldn't go to Kent anymore, the fact that wouldn't take my credits I had 2 and a half year of credit then I got pregnant with my daughter right when I was going to start a second semester at Kent, and I said no, I'm not going to do it, and then so I just stayed home with the kids but then when I went back just knowing how Kent was with the credits in that situation and everything I looked into YSU just it was close driving distance so that's why I ended up there and they took all of my Purdue credits. So, yes, that was nice.

That's a big factor.

Exactly.

So when you got in, um how big of a role did academics play in the decision to?

It was big because when I was initially um taking my prerequisite courses there were several actually there were several students who told me um most people don't get in their first time. You're not going to get in the first time and honestly, you know, there's certain things that as an African American like I feel like I have to be concerned about whereas you know that's what they kind of call that privilege you know, I have to be concerned about but my white friend doesn't have to be concerned about. One of the things is that we're not as smart. So when people tell me that, I automatically, I've been smart my entire life and I don't know if you're telling me this because I'm black, or what, but I know, you know, that um I'm intelligent and I know that I can do it. So, I had made up in my mind personally I'm going to get in on my first try. So Chemistry, Biology I got A's in those courses. And I purposed that I would get A's because I'm like there's no other reason why I wouldn't be able to get into the program if I don't get A's in this courses. It was a major factor.

Where'd you get that confidence?

I think it was the fact that I have these kids and I don't want to waste time I'm not wasting time I'm not waiting another year to get into this program and um it's what I want to do, so I just wanted to do it, you know?

Did you parents have any influence on that or do you think it's more..?

No I think it's more me. They live out of state so I really didn't talk to them much about what I was planning or anything.

But you had that confidence that hey, I don't care what anyone says

Yea, I'm getting in there the first time.

Right and then how was your experience in dental hygiene because you were with us for 2 years?

It was nice. I mean you know had a bond with most of the girls I got along with everybody, the instructors. Of course it was a stressful program, but outside of that I really enjoyed it I'm still in touch with a few of the girls and from time to time at a continuing ed I'll see instructors it's nice when I see you guys. I had a good experience honestly.

That's good. That's really good. Would you um recommend this profession um to other students other people that talk to you?

Yes, I do the only thing I tell then though is what I learned I don't know if It's just the area per say but If they want to do it full time I do tell em you know it may not be for you, if you want a forty hour week, unless you get a job in a couple different offices then you know you may want to look into something else. But if I know it's a mom who only want to work a couple days a week I'm like it's perfect you can pick your own schedule and you can work as little or as much as you want to so it's a perfect career so that's how I go about that when I recommend the profession but I will recommend it you know I think it's good.

That' very accurate and that's how it's been. I've been in this for over 30 years and even back then it was a couple part-time jobs I never had one full time job and it's unfortunate especially if you're young and you need benefits

Exactly.

That's the hard thing well.

You'll always get free dental. That's one thing you don't have to worry about.

Tell me a little bit about your experience as a hygienist today.

Well, today like basically, I work only two days a week because on the off days I work at home with my husband's businesses so um I want to say it's about 8:30 -5 on one day and then on the next day its 8:30-2:00 cause it was actually 8:30 -7:30 but I cut it in half because that was too much.

Yes, 12 hour days are tough.

So I cut that in half because I couldn't do what I needed to do at home, so that's what I'm doing now and that's perfect for me and my schedule you know my family life um and I work for the dentist who I was a patient for

Oh OK

For years so I have been working for them since I got out of hygiene school as soon as they had an opening.

How long has that been?

I graduated in 2011. I was filling in for them all of 2011 as of 2012 I had set days. So it was like two set days after that.

So you didn't have to go out and you know beat the pavement looking for positions?

I tried.

Oh did you try?

Yes, because they weren't hiring me right away they didn't have any room. I sent out so many applications everywhere and I think I will walk into businesses to give them my application and um I couldn't even get an interview, Laughs. I couldn't even get an interview I sent I googled every single dental office in the area and I sent my resume to every single dental office.

What were your feelings about that?

That was very disappointing. I was like really stressed at one point because I'm like I did this and I can't even get an interview and I really felt like I felt really discouraged I because I felt I just didn't even get a fighting chance you know, at least interview me and see what I'm about, you know but I felt like I couldn't even get an interview and there was an office that I sent my resume to and there were some girls who actually did get an interview there and I have personally actually personally brought my resume and met the doctor and I still couldn't get an interview. Yes, it was very disappointing and discouraging and actually coming out of hygiene school I finished my business degree.

Oh did you?

That was part of the reason to because my husband has his own businesses and I said I need something else in case I can't even get a position I said at least with a different degree at least I could get an interview at least I could get a foot in the door I'm like It felt like it was discouraging because the girls who got the position were the ones who had a little pull they knew this doctor or they knew someone who knew somebody and that's how they got in the door and me not having been from the area and not having those connections in the area I really felt discouraged, but I have such wonderful dentists he told me when I was in hygiene school there's a spot it's open for you. and that's how and honestly I feel like that's how a lot of girls get their jobs within hygiene it's because they know the dentist or know their mom is friends with this person yeah so.

When I first graduate I couldn't find a job I went in and just started observing in offices. That's how desperate I was. Unfortunately it hasn't changed that much.

It hasn't not at all.

I hear that from a few people I talk to. So um would you say there are any challenges you face as a dental hygienist?

Honestly the only challenge I faced is when I initially started working at my office, now me having me a management degree I completely understand the importance of training and the importance of managing to just have a productive day and all those sorts of things um I was thrown in there and it was so stress because we do a lot in our office when we've taken over a couple of different offices they don't even perio probe in some of these office so you know I'm starting from scratch h with these patients and their like I've never had that done.

You have to explain it.

Exactly. Our office is heavy on periodontal health and that and we actually do a lot in our office and being thrown into a situation like that versus just the office that just does cleanings you know it was very stressful I'm like thinking in my head I need some training like it's not that I don't know how to do my job but I need to understand how to do it within this office and not doing eagle soft I had to what was hard for me was not doing certain things that I wanted to do with the patient because I'm trying to figure out how to do whatever on eagle soft and I'm running out of time and I'm running a whole half hour behind OK perio chart at next apt and Ahhh. But that was the most challenging and I almost wanted to say I'm done. My husband makes enough money and I don't need to be doing this anyway because that's the point I was at because I was so frustrated Honestly I feel like that was my biggest challenge but now be being there for a while I'm used to the routine and I'm used to it all.

I was just going to ask you what changed.

Just the fact that I finally I started learning everything and still even to this day there's things that pop up and I didn't know that and it was due to the fact that there was never training, but actually in our office you probably heard of the Levin group a dental consulting group our boss hired them to come in and that was one of the major things they talked about and I had brought that up in one of the meetings and so now they're implementing training. So now we have to go out and do training next month to Maryland but um but yeah that's one of the things there's been two new hygienists that come through our office understanding what I went through I help them out tremendously. Because they're like ahhhh.

We had Dentrrix. At least you had that to help with Eagle soft. I remember one time I was subbing in an office, never seen a computer with dental scheduling, never saw dentrix, eagle soft anything and um I was so flustered and I asked someone to help me and she took my chart and said I'll go do it and she would go to the back room and charted everything. that's one of the reasons we got dentrix at YSU. This can't happen to our students, they can't go out there and be blindsided you know by this so but I'm sure there's always things that happen in an office um like you said not having that training of who gets probed when to take x-rays when to tell a patient to come back for a cleaning all of those things

How they want us to walk out services or chart services so much the little tedious things you wouldn't ever think about.

Exactly. That's very true. Umm when you talk to your colleagues about dental hygiene how do their experiences compare to yours?

You know, some of my colleagues basically some are similar but some I would say a majority they have I feel like they have it easy yeah, I know one woman she actually has an assistant that helps her that takes her films and does this so it's just like a walk in the park stress free you know whereas my day is you know I have to plan when I need to go to the bathroom or force myself to go to the bathroom because it's so regimented because I'm dizzy from the time I start to the time I finally if I'm able to take lunch. Yeah, that's gotten better, that definitely gotten better but um yeah it's and I'm trying to think and another young lady who's in an office it's pretty easy for her because she's the only hygienist and they don't have as many patients come through but my office there's a lot of patient's coming through, some it's similar but some it's a walk in the park.

They have more time. Or like you said they're not as busy. It does help if you have an assistant. It makes a world of a difference.

Exactly.

Um. One thing I wanted to talk to you about were some statistics um in 2013-2014 in all of the accredited dental hygiene program in the US and there's 334 accredited dental hygiene programs there were a total of 4.3 Black dental hygiene students, 11.5 Hispanic dental hygiene students, .6 Indian and 71.7% white Caucasian students enrolled in all the programs. What do these statistics mean to you about the profession of dental hygiene?

You know, I don't honestly, I think it's maybe something that um minorities are not really drawn to honestly more so I believe you may of course find more minorities in the nursing field definitely but it's not up there with something that we're drawn to and I don't know if it's something maybe that some students don't feel they can achieve it?

You know like I was told you're probably not going to get in your first time maybe they're discouraged that maybe I can't do this. I'm really not sure, maybe they're not drawn to the profession.

Do these statistics surprise you?

No., not at all. Laughs. Yeah. Unfortunately they don't.

Well that leads me to the next question. Um what kind of things do you think we can do to attract more minorities to the profession?

I think the one thing you mention as far as making your selection um your student selection more diverse, more broad I think that would help. Um

Like what? What other things can we look at?

Of course, grades are important; you don't want someone with just a C average but at the same time lot of times students are weeded out if they're not getting that 4 point GPA even it's 3.5 or something like that, Um other than their background maybe how I honestly don't know what criteria you could look at besides you know just the type of background they have. Just if they're a well-rounded student overall I think that's the biggest thing you just don't have a high enough GPA maybe if there's a section where like per year you could take a minority student even if they don't meet that if they don't make that cut for the highest GPA, it's a great GPA maybe you guys could make a selection.

Looking at some other criteria other than just grades because that's one of the things that we that you know in all the years I have been there 25-26 years it has been um GPA.

Yeah right I think it definitely needs to be broad.

So other things we use to attract students, we have open house program, brochures, we have recruitment personnel, campus tours, these are some of the things we use to attract students to our dental hygiene program. What do you think about the effectiveness of these techniques?

Now, you said brochures, basically what you're doing is more so on campus. I think even if you go to high schools and kind of talk to I mean there's so many minority students within Youngstown city schools, Austintown city schools, Warren city schools if you even go to these communities where they do have a diverse selection of students and present the program talk, even have hygiene students come with you um maybe do a presentation at high schools you know maybe to get students interested or if you know maybe a high school could come tour the dental hygiene program at YSU I think that would help, but just doing it at the school only at the University I think you're not really

reaching out to most students, most students if they see a brochures, they may not take it seriously, or come to open house. First of all they have to be interested in it. If they're already in college they kind of have an idea what they want to go in to they may not come to open house, but if you reach high school students who really deciding and they you know look at the hygiene program and like that's feasible and I've never even thought of that you know they are going into college thinking you know I'm interested in this hygiene program they need to go in there you know maybe considering it,

Right, so maybe a little more outreach than

Exactly, grabbing them in high school versus college.

Another thing I wanted to talk to you about was when you were in school we talked a lot about accreditation you know our program was accredited well the commission on dental accreditation um in 2010 for dental schools ok not for hygiene but for dental schools revised their standards to state that the dental schools must have policies and practices to

1. Achieve appropriate levels of diversity among its students, faculty and staff. 2. Dental schools have to engage in systemic and ongoing efforts to attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and number 3 systemically evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity. Talk to me how you feel about the idea of mandating policies to increase diversity?

I actually think it's a great idea. I mean obviously we have seen in the past year we have seen what has been implemented hasn't been working to draw minority students but if there's plans in place to basically implement these things I think you'd kind of be forced to do it and then therefore drawing more diversity Um I think It's great honestly I know some people hate the fact that they're forced to do it but I mean if we just look at history we see why

Not happening.

Yeah, mmhmm.

It's um again these are standards for dental schools

Right so dental schools have to

They haven't come to dental hygiene yet and we don't' really know if they will or not but um at least in the dental profession, dentistry they are trying to make changes.

Which is great because like I know so many minority dentists

Oh, do you.

Yea, just my niece's dad is a dentist in Indianapolis um and then just people I know you know throughout the US just from connections I know way more minority dentists than minority hygienists unfortunately yeah and I wonder if it's due to these things that their implementing versus hygiene?

Would you ever at some point be interested in going to a high school or like to your children's school and talking to them about dental hygiene?

Oh, Yeah Definitely.

I think that would help for people to see people um of their same nationality, you know, in the profession

It does.

I think there's a lot more we could do. Well thank you for all this information. Is there anything else you would like to add before we end?

Um. Nothing I could think of right off the bat. Um, you had all the great questions.

Laughs.

Nothing I can really think of.

Alright we'll go ahead and stop.

Transcript #11

So can you just tell me that's it's ok to tape record our conversation this evening?

Yes it's fine

Ok so my first question is can you tell me your first recollection of when you decided to become a dental hygienist?

Actually I've always wanted to be in the dental field and I was pursuing dentistry first and I actually was a dental assistant and once I became familiar with the whole behind the scene thing -and background and everything that came with being a dentist – I decided when I was like 19 that hygiene was more – it was right after high school -that hygiene was more it was more my field – it was a better niche for me cause you have the personal relationships and people in most instances want to come to you -my personality is type A so I have a hard time sometimes – I'm a perfectionist – in hygiene you still want to get it perfect – it's different when you want to please people and you don't know if you've actually done something to please them – the customer is hard to please – you gotta do everything in your power to make it's just right and it's hard mentally for me to let that go so I didn't wanna hold that – I didn't wanna take my job home – from day to day – I just don't think I could ever let it go whatever it was that I was doing so probably about 19

Well take me back just a little bit – what even got you interested in becoming a dentist? Was it a person? Was it an experience?

I just loved teeth – weird kid – I loved teeth and there was a man at my church he was a minister and he was also a dentist – and so my passion for teeth when I was a little girl I played with dolls doing injections with toothpicks and things like that -I don't know why I've always been fascinated with that field so he was kinda someone I looked up to and admired and he was African American dentist as well so I was like oh maybe I could do this

Yeah

And after I graduated I got into dental assisting and I just learned all the ins and outs and I worked for many years – about 8 years as a dental assistant uh put myself through school um and applied to Shawnee State university for dental hygiene – but I didn't get in and I ended up going to respiratory as a respiratory therapist

Oh is that right

Yes I call that my default career cause it wasn't my passion and hygiene came around and I applied and here I am so -ultimately like dentistry and teeth and this whole profession has just been a passion of mine -since I can remember – anybody that knows me knows that I

You love it

Like what? Why aren't you a dentist but they're all happy that I've accomplished my dream and that's becoming a hygienist so-

Right

I went back and sought out my dream –

Oh good for you – um so when this dentist or pastor kinda encouraged you did he follow your educational career at all? Was he a mentor or did you have a mentor along the way

No no not really actually no because no one in my family – like he knew I was interested -there were some things that didn't kinda work out – as far as me kinda following him – but when I started working the doctor that I – Dr. [REDACTED] (?) – she's an awesome doctor – and Dr. [REDACTED] (?) they actually have been very key to I guess to mentoring me but it's more through observation and then you know I was a worker so I was just – kinda observed them and they allowed me to flourish and do whatever in the office cause they basically groomed me from 19 on up I was with them for 8 years but honestly I never really had that person – who said go do this go do this -you need to go here – this is how you find money to get there or these are the steps that I took to get there so I really didn't have that – and I think that's why it took a little longer for me – to get to where I am – but everything happens for a reason – and so it's just been a journey and I'm here talking about it –

And how long have you been a dental hygienist?

I just graduated um

Oh did you

In May

Oh congratulations

So this is very new and then the opportunity to go into the master's program arose right after

Wow

So I just said well while I'm in the groove for school I might as well just go ahead and stick with it and get it done and then I'll transition my life –

And you wanted to go into education?

Um hmm yes – I'm in the dental hygiene education program at Ohio State so I have another – my goal is to be done in 2017

Oh good that'll be here before you know it

Un huh yes

So when you said – you said you applied to Shawnee State but you didn't get in – is that what you told me?

Yes

So then how did you decide to attend Ohio State?

Um Shawnee State – it was a lot – it was a big story – I didn't want to go into all that but -and I don't know if it had to do with something graduating African American or having an African American in their program cause at that time I think they had never had one - and so actually was told I was getting in but then it was almost a renege on my whole application process and my acceptance – and don't use that – that's just a side note –

Yeah

Um and I didn't pursue any legalities or anything cause it was a discrepancy with a comparison with grades – someone who got accepted and my grades were higher than theirs and they say they went off this numbering system so – I was little frustrated – I sat there and cried – but – I was like oh my gosh this is crazy what am I gonna do cause I left my job with the (?) and just uprooted my life to pursue this and that's when I went to the dean of the school and the president and talked to them and I actually got into every allied health field except that one –

Wow

My grades were just and so I just I pulled respiratory out of a hat –

Ok it was a default you said

And then it was a default

Something to do

And so I went through that program worked for oh I don't know 4 years and um in various areas just nothing - I didn't wanna deal with life and death cause you know you're the first one to do code work then ER in the hospital it's just a totally different mindset I was able to deal with it and I learned a lot but it was very difficult for me – I took it home – I didn't want have people dying under my hands -just dealing with families seeing their remorse when a family member passes or anything like that -it's just a whole other world – and so then I woke up one day literally and I said I have to make a change -and I didn't tell anybody I just woke up I was working and my life wasn't – didn't feel complete – I felt like I was going through the motions so I just called Ohio State which was 2 – 2 1/2 years now when I put in my application it was the 31st of December the deadline had already passed and the lady – she's gone now I can't remember her name – all these like miraculous things happened – and so they oh we're gonna extend the application to January and I thought oh 30 days to get this whole process done ok whatever just get it done do whatever you have to do all you can do is your best -I put the application in – I was told that I was excellent again -they called me

and told me I was in – no one heard of this man no one heard of anything and they told me Ms. [REDACTED] called me and told me well I'm sorry but I don't know who that is that told you but you're on the waiting list and you're not accepted into the program so it was almost like déjà vu – the same thing that happened came around again -but thankfully my response was different – I was much more like well Lord, if this is what you want for me as soon as you have an open door – so yeah – and from that point on things just started boom to fall into place -and doors just started opening -and I was open to walk in it -they called me like July 3rd or something – and told me I was actually accepted – Ms. [REDACTED] was like if you don't hear from me then don't think that you're accepted I will personally call you and let you know -cause all the seats were filled so someone didn't show and I got in

Oh boy well it was meant to be –

Um hmm yeah I think – this is a blessing cause a lady I helped tend to her when her husband passed away and I just did it out of the grace of my heart -so the moment I woke up 2 weeks later I had filled in my application hadn't talked to anybody she woke up and said I just want to bless you with some money to go to school or to do whatever you need to do and I said to do what and she said well to go to school I think you just need to get out of what you're doing and take a chance and quit your job cause you're not happy and just go don't worry about it it'll be taken care of and all of a sudden she blessed me with money I think it was 100 dollars 50 dollars or something – No she paid for my education

Oh my gosh wow

That's what I said I don't know what you believe in but God opened the door for me

I believe in God yeah yeah and so she was an angel sent for you that's amazing

Yeah and then I got into the master's program no problem and it's been all paid for cause one of my things I didn't want to accrue any more loans

Right

It's a blessing so here I am

Wow small world you know Mrs. [REDACTED] the director of the program she was a classmate of mine

Oh wow

We graduated the same year

That's awesome

Yeah she's pretty cool –

Ms. Carney isn't she being prepped for that position?

Um possibly yeah possibly um -and her name just changed right?

Yes it was Henry

Yes yes when I first (?) I thought ok what happened here? Ok next question- tell me about your experience as a dental hygienist today are you working in an office or are you going to school

I'm actually in dental hygiene I'm a research hygienist slash research assistant that's what helps pay for my school -I work with a doctor at OSU I'm full time there and so I do a lot of sampling -Children's Hospital is where the doctor is pulling a lot of their patients and she's sampling from that demographic – so I do the clinical sampling um I'm in the process of getting into the children's system so I can do the follow-up cleaning but I also work fulltime I'm sort of a coordinator basically like research coordinator and hygienist – I also work part time at an adult clinic private practice so I keep my hand skills up so I do that like every other Sunday and then I work in another office occasionally on Saturdays so I keep myself busy so full time school full time work and kinda like 2 little part times –

Right – I never knew anyone who had office hours on a Sunday –

Yeah he's Seventh Day Adventist he graduated from Ohio State so he does a lot of Alumni things talks and he's part of that group and they do little luncheons so that's where I met him and he used to sit on the board and he would score so he would sit on the board exams

For the clinical

For the board exam

Oh ok

So he was very helpful as far as giving me tips – I would seek him out and there was some other doctors that worked at the school and they're on the board so I was just getting insights unfamiliar setting for me and then he offered me a job – he actually offered me a full time job immediately after school but I didn't take it cause I was – you know this pays for school

Right yeah he wanted you to do the grad assistant thing

It's actually a research not a grad assistant thing

Oh it's not a grad assistant? Oh ok

No it's not it's just full time faculty position

Wow that's interesting yeah we don't have anything like that at YSU –

This was I'm telling you part of my blessing

Yeah

I have state benefits and tuition reimbursement or whatever or tuition assistance they pay for it and I work a 40-hour week –

Wow how was your experience when you were a student at Ohio State – were there other students of diversity in your class

Yes there was another African American and Asian male only one male and I think there was like a Latin descent so there had to be like 4 or 5 of us that were – but 2 African Americans

Um so you weren't the only one – do you think you would have had any challenges or would it be difficult to be the only one -or didn't that even occur to you

I was the only African American when I was an older student so that was kinda different but my personality type I just fit in where I can and do what I need to do and get through you know that part is kinda – it would be nice to see someone that looked like me – and maybe have more of a balance in the class but I was the type of student that I pushed and I was very proactive so I forced myself in people's faces in a positive way just to make sure I wasn't forgotten like I wasn't here just to fill a seat -and I didn't want to be looked at that way so I was a go-getter I was up at 4 in the morning and work into another job overnight no sleep but I still had to perform and get the grades and what I needed to do - so that if I was used as a filler you know what they needed in their program I didn't want to be another statistic I didn't want to be the statistic that was just sliding by – I wanted to be the student that actually participated and made a difference

Did you feel as if Ohio State had a quota they were trying to fill

Um I don't know if that's something as an African American going into an environment that is unbalanced – I don't know if that's something you naturally kinda feel cause if you just look at it well you just gotta fill some chairs cause if you don't if it's all Caucasian they have to have that – you know it has to be there somewhere you can only do so much people don't apply that's one thing but if people apply then I feel as long as they meet the criteria it looks better if they fill the seat with someone who looks different from what the majority is

Um hmm we'll talk about that more a little later about my experience at YSU but I also wanted to ask you would you encourage other hygienists or other people you meet say in an office to become dental hygienists

Definitely yes yeah I do it all the time – all the time I went and spoke at Fort Hayes(?) our career center here just on my own time they're high schoolers and I just take time out of my schedule I've always been like that I just try to go and reach out to the kids – like the low income areas and the public school system because they don't get to hear it that's where I so it was like professional – they came in but sometimes they did and sometimes they didn't so I don't know what happens today but to see people in the health care professions you didn't really see that and dentistry we never saw that in our schools in the

public school systems so you either have to want it for yourself or have a family member or in the community – somebody of influence to spark your mind to think about it but if you don't then you have to have it in yourself – I wanna pursue something that's a little bit different

We have to work a little bit harder in marketing those places Huh?

Yes you do so I speak to dental assistants a lot of times cause I feel that's a dear end job so I try to go and promote other aspects of the dental field so they can grow and actually be more of a benefit to the practice as a whole

What are some other ways we can recruit minority students into the dental hygiene profession besides talking to dental hygienists, assistants, high schools – do you have any other ideas for

Uh um if you have the money to market your TV the Internet the things that people use today- you don't see advertising for that um profession as much as you would for other things – they promote I feel like schools promote generic degrees um just to get you in there and they need to – I call them generic degrees cause once you graduate you can't do anything with those degrees or you have to go really far and get your PhD like in psychology or something like that -so I feel like if it's seen more and people have more of an understanding because the dental field actually has a stigma – pain oh my God pain and people don't like to talk about the mouth they don't wanna talk about how important it is to keep your mouth clean -so you won't get that decay or they don't think the dentist is that important or you're not supported through insurance you know the insurance companies really don't support the dental field so ultimately to answer your question we just have to get it out there whether it's word of mouth or I feel like a marketing standpoint putting it on television so programs need to find a way to get money to invest – put it on Chanel 10 right after the news I might start to think about it if I saw it often if I saw that your program had this available and whoa we have to do different assignments in our master's program and they ask us to go look at different schools and what their dental hygiene programs offer – and some of the ways you have to go and dig and dig and dig to find the dental hygiene profession if you don't think about it ahead of time you don't even know how to search it and that comes to the forefront naturally

Right

It's like dentistry so when people hear dentistry they think that you have to be the dentist – they don't think or know about all the various aspects of that

Alright so we have a bit of an image problem -for our profession we're not going into the schools and actually talking up the profession or like you said marketing it – putting it out in the media so that people will hear more about it or maybe even see people – uh a diversity in that profession – could help

Right cause I was asked to speak at Fort Hayes(?) and I thought it was necessary even though it was primarily an African American school I asked a friend of mine come with me -they were in town – she’s a hygienist as well and so I wanted them to see a connection between the 2 – she’s Caucasian and I’m African American and we’re both hygienists we work together and we have a great time with it you know – we brought them lots of goodies – hold on one second – ok sorry someone just called – um I felt like I found an in with those who weren’t even thinking about hygiene -they told me about their professions to begin with – doctors veterinarians dental assistant radiologists -saying different things they wanted to go into and one of them said hygiene and so that to me was (?) I was like what? How are you a dental assistant and not be intrigued by a different pay scale for one between assisting and hygiene – and the flexibility in the schedule – you’re more independent like just the different perks of hygiene and by the end of the talk many asked again after they heard me speak – what do you think now so she took a survey and 4 other people now said they wanna think about hygiene so now I kinda wanna talk – they come to Ohio State so I see her class often now and so now they kinda keep soliciting me for information

That’s wonderful

Yeah and so I feel if you’re real enthusiastic they will be enthusiastic so I’m mentoring another young lady and grooming her giving her information hopefully to get into Ohio State – I won an award and I took her to my award ceremony -just to put her around the environment and she’s African American and I’m just trying to encourage her

Good for you I think that’s what it takes is for someone to encourage them if they haven’t heard about the profession cause I still meet people that don’t know the difference between a dental hygienist and dental assistant

They don’t I know it’s amazing -and you really have to educate them and you start out I’m the one you see every 6 months I’m preventative care so you won’t have to go see the doctor excepts for a quick spot check but ultimately you wanna come see me but if you have to go over to the chair that means you have something that needs fixed so -but I want to prevent you and save you some money –

Uh 1 other thing I wanted to talk about was when you were accepted into the hygiene program um you talked a little about academics at Shawnee State and I’m sure academics at Ohio State how do you feel about academics being one of the top reasons for accepting students

Um it’s very necessary but having gone through the schooling for hygiene I think that it doesn’t need to be a major – it needs to be a factor – it has to have so much weight cause some of the curriculum I just feel you have to fluff but the job is a very hands-on job -and the people who are working on bedside that manner is more important than whether you know how the dental material how the mouth (?) is formed cause you don’t really do it but it’s nice to know to have background but knowing all those intricate details it’s fluff

but I know you need it to meet accreditation so you need to have people who can actually understand that

Well what other qualities besides academics would you like to see recognized or considered when people are applying to dental hygiene

I feel like personality and I think this would be really cool cause I sat on the board for the admissions committee

Oh

Yeah and so I tried to be as involved as possible – so I’m sittin there thinking these kids are scared outta their wits they don’t know what to say – they probably never had a job before so this interview process it’s ok but the way the questions are asked it’s still a structural – they’re still controlling – the answer in a way I would love to create awesome scenarios not jus telling them but a simulation situation you know I’m putting you in this unfamiliar territory and you’re sitting there every day in hygiene with this person – a stranger and you don’t know how they’re gonna react. So my natural inclination is how do these people react to you’re sitting in the chair and I’m simulating this situation for you so I’m just talking and I’m spitting out these oh I’m so afraid and just to listen and see how that student would or potential student would respond before they even have the knowledge and educational background – how would they just naturally respond

Basically like their communication and critical thinking skills

Yes natural thinking skills because I feel you have to have a natural knack for that – and then you develop it as you go through the program and you master it so it comes like second nature but you have to be that person who – be able to talk to people

Um hmm

You’re scared to death why would you be – cause they have straight A’s -I see it so many times – people who I know will be excellent at the job but they got a B or C in a math or science class – to me it really doesn’t matter – they can focus on something else –

Right ok let me switch gears here – in 2013-2014 there were a total of 4.3 Black, 11.5 Hispanic, .6 Indian, and 71.7 White dental hygiene students enrolled in the 334 accredited dental hygiene programs in the US -what do these statistics mean to you about the profession of dental hygiene?

Um what does it mean? It means that we’re unbalanced – we’re not reaching out to the the the areas that are uncommon – we’re just not reaching out to those communities that need jobs as well -no it’s very lopsided –

Are you surprised by those statistics?

No I’m not. No not surprised at all because that’s pretty much how our educational system looks and my personal views are just like it starts in elementary school when we

first begin our educational process and those opportunities if you don't live in a particular area or within a certain income bracket you're not afforded – certain opportunities unless you go out – you have to really go out and get them -and that's my scenario- I had to go get it

Yeah you just sound like a good motivational speaker –

I've heard that before

Well you do because you've had some obstacles ahead of you – placed in front of you and you just kept moving forward – even to the point where you took a different occupation

Um hmm

You know – nothing's gonna stop me – that's wonderful –

No

Another thing I wanted to talk to you about was you talked a bit before about accreditation and you understand how it works that certain requirements have to be met for our program to be accredited well in 2010 the commission on dental accreditation standards were revised to 1. Dental schools have to achieve appropriate levels of diversity among its students, faculty and staff 2. Dental schools have to engage in ongoing systemic focused efforts to attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and 3. They have to systemically evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity. Tell me about how you feel about the idea of mandating these policies to increase diversity

I just think that is utterly ridiculous I feel that is a sentence that should not even be in there – why should we have to be told – why should we have to force people to think about that it should just be – ugh that drives me crazy – it's just something that should be – it's sad we have to put it in there and that's why I made the statement earlier that there is a quota and people have to meet a quota

It's not for dental hygiene

No it's for dental school but I I'm saying I'm not a dentist but that's my profession I'm in dental profession cause without me – we all have to work together- so you go in your hierarchy so my leader over me feels that they have to speak on diversity and make sure people are aware of that -to me that is poor thinking cause that's being narrow minded and I think we need to broaden our mindsets so we can reach out to those areas that are not having the same opportunities as that majority – what was the Caucasian 71.1 or so – wow that's amazing to 4.2 even to 11 – we're not even half – it takes all of us together and they're still they still have more

Um

It's not even 50% - no they still have 20% more – from the statistics you just read in the profession and that means we're always gonna be outnumbered – this ain't about Black – it's about the multi- the culture

Right I understand what you're saying -so you don't think if the dental hygiene programs had an accreditation standard like this it would benefit dental hygiene programs?

If they had it?

Um hmm, I mean do you think that they should cause right now this standard is only for dental schools so dental schools have to make these efforts to increase diversity – I guess I wanna make sure I'm hearing what you're saying – you don't think that's a good idea –

Well sadly enough it's necessary

Right

It's necessary cause people tend to lose sight and they will naturally go to the way they are used to they're accustomed to go – let's just say people are blinded by what they look like – they don't see the color they don't see anything – they're just in a room and they're lookin at a piece of paper – most instances because of the way the educational system is most Caucasian children are gonna have a higher grade point average because they're in better schools and more opportunity than the African American students um they are also motivated and pushed toward different directions – from my experience

You mean by their parents, teachers

Their parents- other professionals like you said – we mirror what we see – so if you're seeing Caucasian doctors and lawyers and whatever – it's like oh I can do that -that's what I'm supposed to be doing – whereas if you'd never see that – there's nobody to talk to about it or motivate because they're not there so I have to entrust something that doesn't look like me so I have to trust you -you're gonna get your PhD -you're someone that's done what I possibly want to do – become an educator so you're someone I would talk to I would want to use as a mentor but – I gotta get over the fact that you don't look like me – you got a nice tan

It's the lighting in here. I don't know – I'm pretty pale – I put some blush on before we talked

There you go

Or it's a hot flash one of the 2 who knows

So I think it's sad but it's – people still need to be aware – cause we haven't fully crossed the road of – some people still see color – some don't but we hope that those who are being put in position are not looking at that - I think we've come far – but it's still

there but we need to take a moment and look at the person and evaluate that person and what they can bring – and take chances a little bit more in our profession in acceptance process those students – I think the grades should be secondary but the personality and critical thinking skills should be priority

Um hmm at least a more weight than it has been

Yes. Yes. And one last thing I wanted to say if my mind serves me correctly when I was reading we had to go through different schools now the accreditation program does not make that statement about diversity – but – I can't think of where it's at but it's within the protocol of the program a lot of them have it- like a list of goals

Yeah one of the things it says is we have to teach cultural diversity – you know cultural competence

Um hmm

Should be taught within the dental hygiene curriculum – but I don't know anything in our dental hygiene standards that says we have to try and achieve some sort of balance with diversity

I just kinda remembered and oh yeah it's almost the same

Um hmm – yeah or maybe it's something in the Ohio State accreditation

Yeah it was actually – I didn't look at Youngstown but we had to look at 8 different schools for this assignment at the end of last semester so I'm going off of a vague thought so I remember that being something touched on the word diversity cultural and I remember it being in the program – like the goals

Right. Right it could be a program goal and not a requirement well ok that was all the questions I had but before I turn the tape recorder off is there anything else you want to talk about – anything you want to add to the topic

I'm just all for that role playing thing so if that becomes a thing that would be awesome

Good you have some good ideas

And advertising – we just need to get out there and find people who are driven to motivate people to want to come and be a part of this profession

Um hmm I agree

Um hmm

Transcript #12

Ok I just want to ask you first of all is it ok if we tape record our conversation

Yes

Ok. So my first question for you is what was your first recollection when you decided to become a dental hygienist

Um my first recollection meaning how I felt about it

No well more like take me back to when you were in middle school or high school and when was the first time you thought oh I think I'm gonna go into dental hygiene

Oh well I'll tell ya dental hygiene came by default I initially wanted to become an MD I wanted to be a gynecologist or pediatrician and in high school when my parents asked what do you want to do I said well one I wanted to attend medical school and they said if you don't know what you want to do then we're not paying for it well I decided to go to the military I went to the Navy and did 4 years in the Navy and when I got out I had a friend who was also Navy and she said aren't you gonna go look for a job and I said yes – but I don't know what I wanna do yet so and she said (?) you where I work at and I said what do you do – she said dental assisting – dental assisting? – what is it she said well - why don't you just apply I know you'll like it and they'll hire you – so I applied and I was a dental assistant for (?) and there was a I work for a group of (?) for about a year – they trained me and I loved it – and they really gave me the love for dentistry -I thought huh I think I like this and that's how I got started in the dental field – after leaving Hawaii I moved to New York and started working for a new dentist fresh out of school who was building his practice – I worked for him as a dental assistant – and he said you know what [REDACTED] why don't you go to dental school? I said well I just had our first child and I thought I can't go to dental school right now it's not feasible well (?) in basket-weaving – you know it's not gonna take a whole lot – and I'm like uhh let me think about this so that next week we had a hygienist who was an assistant and she got the job -and I watched her and oh she was just phenomenal I mean I just loved the interaction she had with her patients and the amount of knowledge she had and was giving to the patients – and I was oh this is what I wanna do -so that's when I decided I would take classes to become a dental hygienist –

Oh ok

That's how I got in the field

Ok that's interesting then did she mentor you through dental hygiene or did anyone sort of encourage you or help you to apply?

No she did not um basically she probably didn't know that I was looking at her situation cause I never said anything I just watched

Right

I just watched her do what she did and I started taking courses ah a couple courses here and there but I remember when I actually did decide to apply to dental hygiene I was going to Thomas Nelson Community /College – in Hampton VA, and my counselor there ah was trying to talk me into becoming an occupational therapist so I said I think I really want to do dental I've been doing this dental thing for a few years now so I think I wanna stick with that -so she gave me all of this information like a career occupational outlook book and when it talked about the outlook for dental hygiene and how dental hygienists were needed I thought yeah this is what I wanna be – so that's when I decided ok let's do dental hygiene and I applied then to Old Dominion that's my old alumni Old Dominion University in VA,

Ok so were you living near there was that how you decided to go to Old Dominion

It is I was living in Hampton when I applied and moved to Norfolk when I was accepted

Um hmm and how was your experience as a dental hygiene student

Um I'd say it was tough initially but I loved it and and in terms of being a minority in the program

Were there any

Um I found it to be somewhat challenging at times and I think the challenge was then because there were some cultural boundaries between Caucasians Asians African Americans and those of other diversities just not exactly know how to accept or deal with other cultures – you're not used to being around those different cultures -and additionally I think you work a little harder because of the challenges –

Right

But things worked out and I also think at times it's a little tougher – I think um a couple of my instructors really wanted to see what I was made out of and I'll go a little further cause I was a student in middle school and elementary school I was often one of the Black students there – there were classroom I was in and I was probably the only Black - so my education hasn't been easy in a sense – you know what I mean

Yeah

I think that um often times when you're in an inner-city school or urban school sometimes those students are not challenged enough if I may say so it was a challenge initially in dental hygiene school cause I had to learn to accept that just because I'm different doesn't mean I should not follow the same rules that are expected of me but I enjoyed it

Yes

I enjoyed it – I I I found the extra toughness sometimes (?) serve us later on(?)

Ok

It made me a better (?)

Right. Right um tell me about your experience as a dental hygienist today -what do you do

I am a dental hygienist at Ohio State U. and I love it – I really really love it – I love what I do I love my patients – um I think my patients love me – I hope

I bet they do

Now since we're talking on the topic of diversity and race and things like that when I first got hired the patients had been used to seeing a certain hygienist for years she had been a hygienist for 14 years there as a Caucasian woman

Wow

And here I come in – she's no longer seeing patients she's there but – they come in and they look at – like who are you? Where'd you come from and where's [REDACTED]? But once they got to know who I was they have been fine –

Yeah

It's wonderful

Right and is there a lot of diversity in your workplace now

As far as hygienists are concerned?

Dentist?

The dentist

Oh ok how about the dentist

I worked in the (?) department and it's very diverse well I can say in terms of (?) cause they're either Arabic or Indian –

Um

There is one Caucasian gentleman in the program so within my department there's a vast amount of diversity

Ok. My next question is – when you talk to some of your colleagues about dental hygiene how do their experiences compare to yours

They seem very similar I don't think there's much of a difference at all other than I do have a colleague who is African American graduated with me um so she experienced some of the same things I experienced -someone sees you initially I don't think they um don't like the idea of an African American cleaning their teeth (?) I think once you break the ice with them – it's such fun

Right they're

There's no difference at all

Right have you ever had trouble finding employment-

No I've never had trouble finding employment

No that's great – so you were you said you went to Old Dominion and then you were in NY how long have you been in Columbus

I've been in Columbus for about 12 years now

Oh ok and have you always been at the dental hygiene at OSU?

I've worked at probably 4-5 different offices here – I started out subbing and I was hired on to 3 separate offices 1 being a really nice office and then was offered a better opportunity and I moved on to another one –

Good for you that's good that's wonderful – the other thing I wanted to talk to you about was the amount of diversity in dental hygiene or the lack of diversity -in 2013-2014 there were a total of 4.3 Black 11.5 Hispanic .6 Indian and 71.7 White dental hygiene students enrolled in the 334 dental hygiene programs in the US - what do these statistics mean to you about the profession of dental hygiene?

That's it's underrepresented – very much so – very underrepresented

Does it surprise you

Nope no it does not

So you were familiar with the low statistics already

Oh absolutely

Yeah

And I think the (?) having gone through the program (?) so it's easy to see that we're very much underrepresented

Right and it's still that way um for most dental hygiene programs the priority when accepting students into the program the main priority oftentimes is academics – looking at GPAs SATs ACTs scores um what role did academics play when you were accepted

It played a very large role I think that was the most important – GPA and your math and science background -played a big role into you being accepted into the program

Um do you think that's a good thing or so you think there could be some other qualities that should be looked at besides academics

I think it's a good thing however I think that having a well-rounded person in hygiene is also something that should be looked at – um but first and foremost academics -those should be the priority

Ok now I wanna switch gears here and talk about recruitment – at YSU we do things like distribute brochures, open house programs campus tours these are a few of the things techniques we use to attract students to dental hygiene – um what do you think of the effectiveness of these techniques –

I think the effectiveness can also be increased if on those brochures maybe show someone – like the person you're giving one to – your recruitment is to African Americans and your brochure should reflect that – it should have pictures of African Americans because I think that the deterrent to those who have not applied to the program is they don't see their role model as someone like themselves

Right

So there's no connection there

Um hmm

Ah I think that's probably the biggest reason why there's an underrepresentation of African Americans and all minorities as hygienists

Right can you think of other recruitment techniques that would possibly draw more minorities into the profession

Um well you know I thought about this myself – I think that not only are we underrepresented but we don't have that connection for role models in the profession of dental hygiene – but African Americans especially in low income areas or urban areas there is a need for dental care and I think that's the old (?) dental education process isn't there and because dental education isn't there they don't know how or how to reach out for the care they need – a problem when they're going into a career that they don't go into these careers because as a lack of education and the lack of Black role models in the profession

Right and just lack of knowledge about what we do – um

Right

Because the difference between a dental hygienist and assistant – a lot of people still have that confusion –

Yeah they don't know that's right

Yeah - now would you um recommend this profession to others –

Oh I do and I would yes in fact my daughter graduates high school this year – YAY and I'm encouraging her to come into dentistry – as a hygienist or as a dentist – and I'm 99% that her (?) is with me

Oh good

And so she'll have a little (?) with me in dental hygiene

Oh that's wonderful that's wonderful – um the next thing I wanted to talk to you about was speaking of dental schools the commission on dental accreditation actually has a standard in their dental school it says that dental schools have to achieve an appropriate level of diversity among its students, faculty and staff they also have to engage in ongoing systemic and focused efforts to attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and they also have to systemically evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity – talk to me about how you feel about the idea of really mandating policies to increase diversity

Oh I think that's wonderful – and if all professions did the same thing we'd be better off because when you look at organizations they need to represent the population – um I think we'd all be better off – so by implementing those policies I think you're able to attract or – yeah you're able to pull in those people you need to represent the whole – when you have that off balance – that creates some type of – what would I call it – like a friction type of thing – I think that's why the whole – for lack of better word I can't think of what I want to say now – it it it creates confusion -when they are underrepresented –

Right. Right

It tends to create bias I think

Right um ok I wanted to thank you for all this good information is there anything else you want to add before I stop the tape recorder

No nothing I can think of

Ok

Transcript #13

Ok so I'm going to tape record our interview and the first question I have for you is try to think back what was your 1st recollection when you decided to become a dental hygienist

Um well I did dental assisting in NY city and you know at that time I liked working in the you know dental assisting and I thought about it at that time but as time went by – I stayed with it about 6 months to a year and I ended up doing retail and then moved back to Youngstown and then a year later I thought about doing hygiene here but and I spoke to some people and they was like there's a waiting list and they pick certain students it's 4.0 you gotta have a great point average so at the time – I haven't been in school I went 2 semesters I think I was more afraid thinking oh I wasn't gonna make it – to get into this program if they only picking certain students I just didn't feel I would get that 4.0 – so that you know kinda held me back from trying to apply to the program and then when I did register to go to school I was thinking about accounting and every time I passed by the hygiene and I seen that and something was telling me this is what I wanna do

Um hmm

And my brother-in-law he's a dentist also and he always told me you should look into it

Now is he the one that got you into dental assisting?

Um yeah he told me to do that – dental assisting and he also mentioned hygiene it was just I was always afraid they're not gonna accept me you know my grades as in high school they weren't I was an average student – above average and um and I just thought I wasn't able to apply for the program and I didn't think they were gonna accept me because of that

Right

And then once I started doing the accounting program and I was getting A's and was pushing myself and saying I was doing really well – and I thought I'm just gonna try and put my application in and see where it goes from here and they ended up calling and one thing led to another

Right. Good

So that – I was always interested in and once I was assisting I always wanted to do it I was always afraid

Um hmm right

Of failure you know

Sure like you're not gonna make it

Yeah

Yeah so did your brother-in-law first kinda give you the idea about dental assisting or was it something else that kinda

Well dental assisting a friend of mine she was assisting and then I went into and she say oh we need an assistant so then from there I worked in her office – and I enjoyed working there – I did assisting and then I did front desk and doing a little x-rays in NY city it was a little different I don't think you need – every day we were just doin it without license – but I did a little bit of x-rays and I enjoyed it and that's what led from there and I spoke to him about it and he mentioned it he said maybe you should do hygiene – it's a challenging program but I know you can do it and time went by and he and finally when I came back to school I thought you know what – let me just go and apply

Do you think having a dental professional in your family had a big influence on you

Yes. I think so – yeah he would always speak to me about it and push

Um hmm so

And he would say so did you think about it? I think you should – I know accounting and business is broad – you can graduate and there's this broad -meaning it's a whole different job- so where hygiene you can graduate and get a job where you know you can make your own schedule you have your grandkids and children you can work around that

Right

So that's what

Yeah he was looking out for you

Right um hmm

So how did you make the decision to actually attend YSU

Well I raised my kids as a single parent so it and then I started thinking I raised them on my own and just um working at jobs here and there I just knew I wanted something better for myself – I didn't want to work these minimum wage jobs – and I knew I needed some education to get more money or so that's what made me go back to school and my first day of going and seeing and they gave me a paper and a syllabi and I'm like I'd look at things and I'd say oh no – I thought about it and I was like am I gonna be able to do this and all this work cause it's kinda discouraging when you see all this paper and then I'm like if I drop out what am I gonna do next am I still keep doing working minimum wage or do am I gonna get my education and get something more

You were living in Youngstown?

I was living in Youngstown

And YSU was the obvious place and then

Um hmm

Did you have help with your kids while you were going to school or were they old enough

Well at this point I was older –

They were grown

Yeah really I was just helping out with my grandson and my kids once they seen I was going to school they wouldn't bother me as much so

Helping out

Yeah Mom –

Right um tell me a little bit about your experience as a dental hygienist today

Today? I enjoy it I really like to help patients and especially once I'm done with their cleaning and I give them their education and that's what I learned in school – I used to think I oh this program is so strict but I'm glad that we learned and that we learned a really good program – and to help and knowing these patients are happy and when I'm telling them you know – the education the brushing and what effects it has to their -their oral health has to their health especially diabetes some of the patients didn't even know some of the hygienists would tell them do it kinda makes me feel really good – and then once they leave they'll go talk to the doctor and come back and say you know I gave him a good word on you and I really enjoyed you as a hygienist and they say I hope you stay with us –

Oh well

Yeah so I enjoy helping and then the children cause I've had some children comin in there 6 years old and plaque where you couldn't even see – like completely covering the teeth and I talk to them and show them with the mirror and show them before and after so it's nice to see

Yeah they need a lot of education

Oh yes –

When you talk to your colleagues about dental hygiene how do their experiences compare to yours

Well um you know I spoke to Crystal and she told me she went to – cause I was tell her about my office now – she said her first office she was feelin that the doctor was not doing you know unethical things she didn't feel comfortable at her office but now she has a new job and she loves it she can schedule her own patients and if she needs a certain amount of time she needs a half hour an hour and she says she enjoys it

Um hmm

She likes what she's doin and Cindy you know I spoke to Cindy and she just got a job so...Dana she said that she likes doin (?) more than hygiene

That's interesting which is good

Yeah

Is she thinking about dental school?

Yeah. Yeah

Um that's good um so when you were a student here you had a very small class – how was your experience at YSU as a dental hygiene student –

At first when I first walked in to a small class I was kinda intimidating – feeling like – I don't know anybody in there that's why I stay to myself – I'm very quiet and I just felt a little uncomfortable and then those time – the younger girls and I'm the older you know younger girls always go back and forth and tease and stuff so I kinda at first I was a little uncomfortable because my first language is Spanish- and I don't speak very well English which I'm trying to improve and that's because my mother she spoke Spanish and then when I came home she couldn't help me out with a lot of my work

Oh

So it was really learning on my own –

Right

And she went to school through 7th grade and was in Puerto Rico when she came here it was all Spanish and she was in NY and they spoke nothing but Spanish there but when she came here she started she still speaks with a strong accent

Yeah yeah

But it was a little intimidating but and then after time went by I got a little comfortable

With the faculty

Faculty? Yeah yeah and I think they helped when I came to your office or the Dean and they sat down and talked to me – and helped me out and then I – the first few months or so and then I felt more comfortable in the beginning I was like I'm the only one here and most of these girls are younger and have 4.0s and gonna make the program and you know it's different

It's intimidating

Your test was the first test and I was like oh my God am I gonna be able to make this

Yeah you did

But I did yeah

And you did um I know it hasn't been long but how is your experience as a dental hygienist so far maybe encouraged you to influence or not influence others to be dental hygienists? Would you suggest this profession to others –

Yes I do and it's funny cause there's an assistant at the office and she said she always wanted to go to hygiene she's goin to school now and she's afraid of going into the program cause she has a child and then I explained to her there's always ways around it if you really want it you can do it I told her – I gave her the example of Crystal- I said she drove almost an hour and a half and come to school with a child and I said you'll find a way to do it and if that's something you really want I think you should do it and it will help and then she said -what was it – oh -She was worried about her money because how's she gonna be able to go to school and ah work?

Right

Cause it does take up a lot of your time –

Were you able to work through hygiene school

Well you know I did a little bit of work with my cousin -just doin little side work just gettin loans or just different things in school

Cause it is full time

Yeah

Um one of the other things I wanted to talk to you about for most dental hygiene programs when we select a class as you mentioned before you need a high grade point average so one of the highest priorities for recruiting students is a high GPA or ACT or SAT scores – what role did academics play when you were accepted into the dental hygiene program?

(SHE ASKS YOU TO REPEAT THE QUESTION)

Um k

Cause usually we looked at whoever had the highest grade point average was the one we accept so how do you feel about that

Um I think kinda knowing that it kinda discouraged – cause there's a student that may have 2.7 or 3.7 and you're competing with 4.0 and so it does have a large effect cause you think I'm not even gonna try this program cause they're not gonna accept me I'm not sure if I had 3.5 3.6 I just ended up doing that if I get accepted, I get accepted I think that has a lot of play within with some students knowing if they apply to the program well I might not get accepted

Right might be discouraged

Yeah discouraged thinking I'm competing with – they're not gonna pick me so why should I apply in the program?

Right – do you think there are any other qualities we should look at besides academics

Mmm... I think just seein – cause you have to take a lot of pre-reqs so see how they doin – even if they're not getting 4.0s seein if they push themselves or going to class cause I know some kids don't go to class

Um hmm

And see if they're still interested and interview them

Um

Because um I did very well I was getting A's and Bs and so I know I was on the Dean's List – and I got my first C I think it was in psychology and then when I went to apply for the program they had like my biology and different things and I think it was chemistry so she told me so since you don't have it – you could apply the following year – so I say I don't wanna wait that long I said can I do anything else can I take summer program and try to fit in these subjects and she said yeah and then you'll be able to apply I think in January but I took too many classes and I ended up – I don't know if you knew this – I ended up failing um microbiology by 2 points and it was I used to do all my extra-credit and that day she said hand them in after class instead of in the morning when you walk in – my son was texting me I'm outside I completely forgot to do the extra credit and that right there got me to the C and then I needed a C to get into the program so when I spoke to Ms. [REDACTED] and she said I'm sorry we changed everything and you have to have the C so I was really I shouldn't have overloaded myself

Right

Cause I had chemistry I had micro I had a busy schedule classes that I tried to push and cram in there and then over the summer she looked at my transcript and she seen I was doin very well and that was the only class and she ended up she said I'll let you go into the program – just make sure you re-take this class

Good for her I'm glad

Yeah so she helped me

Get you in

Yeah

Um I just wanna switch gears for a minute – in 2013-2014 there were a total of 4.3 Black 11.5 Hispanic .6 Indian and 71.7 White dental hygiene students in the 334 accredited dental hygiene programs in the US. What do these statistics mean to you about the dental hygiene profession?

Hm well I think that um I just um

Does it surprise you at all?

Um it really doesn't surprise me only I feel as in minorities it comes to sometimes some of these students are not goin to school their parents they didn't go to school – so I think it's lack of education or parents or someone pushin them maybe they didn't go to college and then pushin them or tellin them goin to school or hygiene or encouraging that and I think that and what I was thinkin was after the program just goin into schools lettin children know about how important oral hygiene is – and lettin them know there's jobs out there encourage them when they're young in high school – junior high school and start them from there – when we went out to some of the classrooms and teaching I went to my grandson's and they were very interested in learning how to brush and how do you do this and so I think it has to do with sometimes the parents

Right and more exposure

Exposure yes

And getting more children exposed to the profession so they're familiar with it

Um hmm

Um um and I want to talk a little bit about recruitment because we've identified that there's a lack of diversity in the profession so here at YSU we do open house programs we pass out brochures we do campus tours these are some of the techniques that we use to attract students into the dental hygiene program. What do you think of the effectiveness of these techniques?

Yeah I think it's a really good program showing them around and giving out brochures so they can get knowledge of

Um hmm – what do you think as far as attracting minorities -are we doing enough

Are you doing you say

Um hmm

Um yeah I think maybe going into like Youngstown schools where there's more minorities and educating them passing out brochures and even lettin them know that and um and not only that like you were saying – with the job even if they have – cause sometimes minorities in high school they have some children and they feel like they can't go to college –

Right

There's a lot of grants and help out there for them which sometimes they don't know that

Right let them know about that

Let them know that there's a lot of help for them

Right. Right. Getting out into the schools

Um hmm

Another thing I wanted to talk about was in 2010 the commission on dental accreditation cause you know we talked about accreditation and how we have to go by certain guidelines- for dental schools their accreditation states they must have policies and practices in place to achieve appropriate levels of diversity among its students, faculty and staff that they have to engage in ongoing and systemic efforts to attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse background and they have to systemically evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity – talk to me about how you feel about this standard and the idea of mandating policies to increase diversity

Ok so

So this is what dental schools have to do to be accredited they have to show that they are meeting these guidelines for dental schools not dental hygiene – how do you feel about having to do that

(SHE'S READING SILENTLY) so the question is

Do you think that's a good idea?

To bring in diversity

To bring in diversity yeah

Yeah

Do you think that um these initiatives – what impact do you think these initiatives would have for dental hygiene school

Yeah I think it would help you know what else I think would help I know that they go by grade point average but if some other minorities are trying to get in at least pick a few of them – cause it's 2.5 and better you get into the program

Um hmm

At least to have one or two even though they are let's say a little bit below – at least pick 1 or 2 out of there

A little more balance -Yeah give them a chance – ok – is there anything else you want to add about this topic – um we talked about recruitment and ways to attract more students –

Um lemme see um – then you know I think sometimes minorities they're afraid no not afraid just won't go into these programs thinking ok I'll be the only minority there so it

kinda discourages them and I feel that sometimes they don't feel like they belong -then they stay to themselves –

So maybe coming into the program if you saw at least one other person

Yeah you'd feel a little comfortable

You'd feel like you weren't the only one

Yeah. Yeah and then and like I said it just depends on how they were brought up so and I'm not saying overall cause you can't judge a whole race you gotta judge it individually and sometimes they might not speak the proper English use different words and then - someone else might laugh about it in class then you feel uncomfortable –

Um hmm

You won't speak or say anything cause you feel like different so I think that kinda has – cause I was talking to someone else and they was in a communication class and he said – he was African American - and he was afraid to speak cause he spoke a little different and when he was saying his speech other students were giggling and he felt they were laughing cause of how he spoke – and that's what I say you go in there for your education and try to block everything cause I felt that way at first you're there for yourself and just get through it just ask your professors and anyone to help you out and get by

Um hmm- you can do it – you're a good example –

Yeah and that's why some students like I spoke to a lot of children oh well we didn't do well in high school and I said you know what that doesn't mean anything don't let that stop you

Um hmm

Cause I didn't do well in high school and for a while I used to feel like oh I might not be able to make it through college – my sister said Lily you're smart just do it and that when I end up and I tell them you just gotta study hard for what you want you apply yourself there were nights I would just read things over and over and over until I finally get it - some can read it one time and comprehend what's but you just gotta apply yourself and I tell them now I went to school later and finished my program my son he's afraid of going to school and you know school's not meant for everyone and there's also other programs there they can go to

Right

Exactly –

Transcript #14

Ok, so [REDACTED] is it Ok if we tape record our conversation today?

Absolutely

So the first question I have for you is if you could think back and tell me what was your first recollection when you decided to become a dental hygienist?

It was um the profession wise or do you mean when going to school right?

Yes, going into school, yep, going into the profession.

Um I graduated from high school and at that point I had to figure out my next move which I knew was going to be college but um, originally I wanted to go for four year education however I was in a situation when I was an International student and um I was not a citizen at the time so I knew that making a four year commitment might be a little bit difficult because things might change and I would have to go home so in my mind I had to pick something that was less required less time so community college was definitely an option and I've always been interested in the health aspect and um honestly I wanted to make a difference because I had a horrible experience as a child when it came to the dental field. I ran away from dental offices, I've been traumatized so I figured you know it will be an opportunity to make a difference on a small scale and hopefully be able to touch lives of people.

Ok, Ok, Did um did someone in your family or someone you know say to you, you know have you thought about dental hygiene or is it something you sought because you wanted to go to a community college and it was a health field. Why didn't you choose nursing for example?

I cannot handle blood except for the mouth. That's the reality. But when I looked at options and of course there were other options and nursing was definitely one of them I outweighed what I can handle personally and the idea of working individually one on one with the patient the time we have in the operatories and having that educational um aspect was definitely a major component not that nursing doesn't have it but nursing in my mind is a little different response to patient education and having time with the patient.

Right, that's true. So you were an international student so did you have anyone mentoring you through to apply for dental hygiene or to start your dental hygiene career?

Honestly, just a very easy process in terms of just meeting with a counselor. I did have an international counselor in on top of the academic one. My international counselor had

to see my progress, but the academic one was the one guiding me through the process itself.

But not necessarily dental hygiene, they were just there to get you into the college experience.

Right, that is correct.

How did you make the decision to attend the college that you did?

The decision was I can't say 100% made by me. I originally came to Dayton Ohio and after I finished high school down there because my mom has girlfriend in the Cleveland area and we were so new trying to figure our next move we decided to move to Cleveland because it was going to be a little easier knowing someone getting acclimated um in a totally foreign country with different roles and regulations, so we chose Cleveland and at the time a lady was actually teaching at Tri-C and um she? gave me the book and she said well I know, I teach, I know the school has a good reputation I know they have good programs so said, so here's the catalog of what you can choose from as far as the profession because and because we kind of settled in the area, Tri-C ended up being commuter wise the best the best choice.

The best choice, OK. What was your experience like when you were a dental hygiene student?

Very stressful. I tell my patients all the time when we start discussing grinding and clenching I got my clenching from dental hygiene school.

Me too.

It happens to the best of us. Um, it was very stressful time, it was very difficult time I dealt with language barrier, I dealt with being in college in foreign country and that experience because it was very different from what I knew of colleges of universities back home.

What country are you from?

Russia, But if I would have the opportunity I would do it all over again.

Were there other students with diverse backgrounds in your class?

Yes...there was another lady who was from Russia who ended up being my best friend, yes; you do meet your best friends in hygiene school. There was a young lady from Ukraine, Albania and Philippines. In my class yes, we had quite a diverse going.

Do you think that helped when you went to dental hygiene?

I do and I don't, possibly because prior to us, the foreign students joining there were other students before us, the faculty were very open to us and accepting of the fact that we are not necessarily of the same background and they were respectful of that and didn't necessarily mind if we came after class and we didn't understand something and needed more clarification of anything that was welcomed. I did not feel any prejudice.

That's good to hear. Tell me a little more about your experience as a dental hygienist today. A little bit more about where you work and things you have done so far in your career.

Oh I think I've done a little bit of everything. I have this is, I have been pretty fortunate. This is my 9th year, my ultimate dream when I graduated hygiene um somewhere deep inside that I was hiding for quite some time was definitely to be in the world of academia and I remember as a student watching the instructors run through the clinic like it's the end of the world trying to get from one student to the other. I thought my goodness that was my highlight. I would like to be in those shoes. It was an interesting journey to get to that point nor did I ever think I would. I joined a private practice after graduation um I worked in two very high end practices um one was solo one was with two doctors, 3 hygienists, seven operatories very high end um very high production but it at same time very family oriented, very well established so my that was in Akron, Ohio. Then I joined a new practice one of the Dr.'s wife opened in Solon and she was very much into the cosmetics so her whole approach was this spa dentistry we had you know massages in the chairs, we had people who could put the glasses on watch movies while they're in their appointments um paraffin treatment for the hands so she went all out in terms in cosmetic approach so that was interesting experience, so it was tailored to a certain population and so I decide that I wanted something more. I realized that not everyone is fortunate to come and have that spa experience not everyone can afford it.

Right.

And as we know unfortunately as far as benefits and payments that is what Dr.'s charge is not necessarily regulated..Of course she was able to target a certain population so that's the way that she approached it so I was debating a lot as far as what the next step should be and everyone...said next step was dental school so I went back, I received my undergrad from Youngstown State so I decided to investigate what would it take for me to apply to dental school. Case Western was definitely number one, cause I had no desire to move my parents are here and there is just the three of us. So I thought it was a good idea to get into the environment see from the inside before I would invest time money and possibly be accepted into the school so I um ended up doing a research helping one of the he's an instructor in research within the dental school I helped him with his research by performing periodontal debridement on his HIV –positive candidates in research study to help him identify the bacterial load...and assisted him in that manner

and I also worked in Case Western has a clinic that is um kind of set aside for employees and students and I had an opportunity to work and provide hygiene services at that facility as well, so it kind of brought me into the school and I liked it I enjoyed it and I am decided to go forward I took the rest of the sciences I needed but I guess what I had to realize and unfortunately it took a little longer now looking back on it um it is what everyone else wanted for me but not what I wanted for myself so I needless to say that didn't happen and I wanted a change and um I remember going to my program manager and asking her to sign my application for licensure in New York cause I said I'm going to move I need something different and she said that she would but she asked me if I would do one favor for her in return and at that point sure you giving me a signature I'm sure I can do whatever I can return the favor whatever it is and she said that she was going to open a position as a preceptor all I ask is that you send an application and at that point I obviously had been looking in New York and applying and I thought what's one more application and I did and for the first time it was such as easy process I felt all the doors were opening in front of me instead of closing into my face so after 3 interviews I got the position um as a allied preceptor for both dental hygiene and dental assisting programs and that was 3 years and it was 3 amazing years because what it really fulfilled for me professionally personally is that urge that I had to work with community.

Mmmhmm.

I have always been um I have always volunteered at the free clinic that we have by its actually very close to Case Western. I volunteer by providing hygiene services there when I worked in the private practice um when I was working with the college I was able to take the students there I established that partnership the students had that experience. We went out to the community in educating and bringing kids from head start and charter schools to our facility to make sure they get services.

That was your role as preceptor to bring the students to the community?

That was one of my roles to expand our community outreach and I was very thankful because I had that freedom. I had the freedom to do as much or as little as I wanted. I have to say I have been very fortunate to have a very solid group behind me as far as the faculty of course the students cause if they're not motivated if they're not interested it's not going to happen. When I first started they probably did 9 events a year and then when I left we were up to 36.

Wow. That's impressive.

It was it really was thank you, it really was a wonderful experience.

When you talk to some of your colleagues about dental hygiene how so their experiences compare to yours?

Um colleagues in the private practice?

Or colleagues that you graduated with?

Sure, Sure Sure, I would probably say that theirs is probably a little more traditional. Private practice, most of them now have families have children so they enjoy the flexibility of you know I want to work 3 days a week and spend the time with my children so and I actually had a student of mine who graduated a year ago and young lady probably 22 and I talk to her shortly after while she was trying to find a place of employment and I try to keep her in good spirits and motivate her. What I didn't realize is that this profession is designed for women who don't want to work full time. For moms who want to balance that life. And that made me think I mean she has a point, yes, but it's also whatever you want to make out of it. I remember in the beginning I worked in two different offices and I work 6 days a week. I would never do that again.

Laughs, that's hard.

You know you're ambitious, you just graduated - you want to conquer.

That leads me to the next question. How have your experiences influenced you or not influenced you to tell other people to go into dental hygiene?

Um, I at the beginning of my professional growth I would probably suggest that whenever someone approached me with that question I always suggested they should go and observe a couple of different hygienist not where they get their dental needs fulfilled but different places and definitely a couple different hygienist. And now after being in the world of academia I am a little more I ask more questions as far as why are they driven by this. Why they want to do this. A lot of people are very open in terms of they say I went on the bureau of labor statistics and I look at the wages and I like that and I say but you know you have to think about it a) it's not going to be a motivator for a very long time and b) some of those numbers are not based in your area those numbers are not realistic so you have to keep that in mind as well and sometimes when people tell me that I would probably, I don't know, I would probably share stories when you have to work in the environment that is not necessarily healthy that you do work with a lot of blood born pathogens and on top of that you add the fact that no one wants to come and see you and you do inflict pain but you don't mean to but you have to be able to present it to the patient in the sense that yes it's going to be uncomfortable stick with me work with me and we're going to see some results so if someone is only driven by a money factor that's not going to last so as of right now I try to um ask a lot more questions just suggesting them to go observe a hygienist as that ..my teaching experience.

Let me switch gears for a minute. My study is on diversity in dental hygiene and how we can increase diversity. I'm going to read to you a couple of statistics..to get

your perspective on them. In 2013-2014 there were 4.3 black dental hygiene, 11 % Hispanic and 71.7 white Caucasian students enrolled in the 334 accredited dental hygiene programs in the US. What do these statistics mean to you about the profession of dental hygiene?

It needs to change. Definitely definitely. If I may comment on it what I've experienced is that when we're talking about different races and when we're talking about you said 4. something for African Americans.

Yes 4.3%.

What I've experienced with African American students is the majority of them, dental hygiene program itself is very demanding in sense of time, finances and I think and it breaks my heart to say this sometimes people don't realize no how many times we tell you this is how much it's going to cost, we give them the breakdown, we might find a better way a cheaper way but unfortunately they're unable to so the finance aspect is what I think really dilutes you know those numbers for me from my observation then you add child care then you add the person ...I couldn't work when I was in hygiene school and I would not wish it upon anyone. It was so demanding and then we're looking at students who already have families so now they're balancing school life and a significant other who might not necessarily understand what they're going through. So that and I think that just is you know adds to the difficulty of getting through the program and if there's no support system be it emotional or financial it definitely affects the number.

Do you have any opinion that you want to share on any obstacles or difficulties that international students have as far as getting into dental hygiene programs?

Language, language barrier, but the reality is it's we're talking about medical terms so um you know those are thankfully based on Latin so I think we're OK there um what we've implemented in our program and not necessarily across the border for all hygiene schools is TOFIL, English as a second language. That unfortunately in my experience eliminated potential international students

Does the TOFIL measure their communication skills?

It measures writing, reading and communication. However, what I have an issue with I took when I applied to Tri-C after finishing high school here because English was not my first language I had to take a Michigan test which tested me either into ESL or tested me into College composition so I guess I don't see a point in taking another test.

Mmhmm.

Why can't International students take Michigan test and figure out where they're going to be placed based on that. Why do they have to pay another \$250.00 for another test and again who is it could be used as elimination criteria and we argue the same thing not everyone tests the same you know people get test anxiety does that mean they can't communicate does it mean they can't write, no it doesn't, it doesn't mean they don't know the information.

That's true, it's very true.

We've had this discussion when I was still with the college as far the admission process and I understand there's cons and pros but I really do like the idea of interviews. I really do but there's a lot of negativity associated with that and I understand that I really do but if it's not interview maybe they can write 250 words why they want to do it what motivates them.

Right now what does, does Tri-C use academics and grade point average as the main indicator for who they accept?

Absolutely. it's the grade point average on sciences, English and Psych. So we look at all of them then we pull out ..I should be speaking in the past, I'm sorry, I still feel because I talk to everyone and I'm still engaged with students and still a part of it and they pull sciences out and calculate the GPA for sciences. They have a very strict policy as far as with withdrawals and failures.

OK

So I do believe students can there could be only one "W" and one repeat.

OK. we have a similar policy. Um, another thing I wanted to talk to you about was recruitment um at our University we don't have a lot of diverse students applying to our program so some of the things we use are open house programs we have brochures we have campus tours these are a few recruitment techniques we use to attract students to our dental hygiene program. What do you think about the effectiveness of these programs?

I think the effectiveness of these programs depend on the number you are going to have and that number is never guaranteed so in my mind Tri-C has something similar as well we have a bulletin board that we take and display it there are brochures, call, stop by the office, kind of do that, um what I like I think we need to plant seeds a little bit earlier so what I've enjoyed in my time in the college is to get out to high schools to um speak I've sent a couple of second year students to they started doing um like a first year experience course that has no college credit associated with it I don't believe so it's kind of mandatory I think universities have it

We're just starting it.

OK, so you know what I'm referring to. I think they started it two years ago. I had a couple of our 2nd year students go and present to that environment and discuss dental hygiene and answer questions I think in that situation it benefitted both parties because the students that were in the class learned about the possibility of the profession and the program from their peers which is a little bit I think the information is perceived differently and then what my students did was they promoted the clinic therefore were able to recruit some patients so it's a win win situation

Yes, that's a good idea.

Laughs. You have to do what you have to do. So in my mind those programs can be effective but I just think we need to start a little bit earlier so I would probably do more high school, career night and I realize that you can have a board up and you can have brochures but to have that in person interaction sometimes is a little bit more effective and um following up is very important I think it's very important regardless about what we're talking about, following up with patients is important. So if someone is interested like a student are they going to take that next step or say I'll walk you over to the office to pick up an application, or show you where a counselor is where something is actually happening on campus.

Another thing I wanted to talk to you about. In August 2010, the commission on dental accreditation, I don't know if you're aware of this or not, but it states that dental schools must have policies and practices in place to achieve a level of diversity among its students, faculty and staff.

I'm sorry, breaking up a little bit.

The dental schools have to achieve appropriate levels of diversity among its students, faculty and staff. They have to engage in ongoing and systemic and focused efforts to attract and retain student faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and systematically evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity. Talk to me about how you feel about mandating policies to increase diversity?

Could you please repeat the question, I'm sorry it cut out.

Talk to me about how you feel about these standards and mandating policies to increase diversity?

I don't know how they can mandate it, I really don't see a way I can see the recommendation of it absolutely, but I don't know how they can mandate it I think that's

a very strong word to use in that description of a standard because we can try but we can't make someone do something they don't want.

Mmmhmm

You know I think your university and the college here obviously has programs and assistance in place to help students but again if the students don't feel it's enough or they can pull the load kind of to what I've mentioned earlier be it the financial aspect or child care or emotional stability, there's, you know you can't change the curriculum. You can't make it you know to the point where's it's a walk in the park, right. In my mind it has to be challenging, difficult for the reason I've always looked at it this way if we start here in our educational institutions and then the students we live in the realistic world it's going to come down a little bit it will, absolutely. So we can't start someone midway and then they're going to drop down to ground level so our standards have to remain high so to mandate it I think it's too strong of a word, we don't have the power, I mean if we could all of us would love to have unlimited resources to provide to underrepresented populations so they can complete it I'm sure they want to. But I, I would love to see that happen but I think that perhaps you know perhaps they could go further and propose some strategies you know to the educational institutions versus just kind of mandating it from them

And those things that I said, those things were for dental schools not dental hygiene schools, those are standards for dental schools right now.

I'm sorry,

They're not for dental hygiene at this point.

But you know I don't know I've had the experience with Case Western and if anything I feel like a minority, really, a lot of Asian, a lot of Indian students so unless, I'm sure they're basing it on the national numbers and everything but it could maybe driven by where the schools are at people maybe don't want to relocate or maybe people do want to relocate.

Alright, well is there anything else you would like to add on this topic before we end.

I don't think so, if something might come up late.

That would be fine, you could always e-mail me. I'm going to go ahead and stop the recorder.

Transcript #15

OK

OK, so I'm talking to [REDACTED] and I appreciate you uh doing the interview today and is it OK if we tape record our conversation.

Yes, that's OK

OK, Alright, so my first question for you is, what was your very first recollection when you decided to become a dental hygienist?

Um, I think I was actually at my dentist's office and the hygienist that um started to talk to me about it he had been my hygienist for about 8 years and um I was telling him um and me we always talked a lot when we go he was really cool, down to earth and I was telling him about how I was trying to get into a nursing program at one of the community colleges but um there was a really long wait list I just wasn't for sure what I wanted to do always wanted to be a nurse that's all I thought about doing so he was like um well have you looked into dental hygiene and I was like no I was like I guess I just never thought about it and he was like well it's probably a lot of the same prerequisites you should probably look into it he was like cause that's the hygiene program I went to at Columbus State and so I was like OK maybe I'll look into it. So I looked into it and I ended up applying first to the one at Ohio State but then um they had uh um just some higher requirements that I was able to meet at that time so I just ended up going to Columbus State

Oh, OK

for dental hygiene I think ..told me ... was kind of like I was already in school for a couple of years I was kind of like getting antsy trying to ..ok I'm going to go ahead and go to um Columbus State and apply and I didn't get in the first time I applied but the second time I applied um they told me I was really close I had everything I needed they just had a lot of applicants. First they told me I didn't get in and then I was at work one day I was working on campus and they called me and told me somebody dropped and I was next on the list so I got in

Oh, good for you, so you went to Columbus state and that's a 2-year program. What year did you graduate?

In 2006, yes, 2006

Oh, Ok, Oh, good. So basically it was someone who told you about dental hygiene that was already in the profession.

Yes, he's a hygienist.

OK So some people that I've interviewed say that um they had a mentor that helped them through you know once they got into the program did this gentleman um mentor you through as you were going through the program or did he just was he the one who gave you the idea about dental hygiene?

He was just the one that gave me the idea, so funny because I ended up having to stop going to that office because my insurance had changed and at that time I was under my mom's insurance so I didn't even see him for a while after that because my insurance had changed and um it was like he just mentioned it to me and he gave me that lead to go forth that and it was funny because he ended up teaching one of my classes at Columbus state like my second my yea like my second quarters into the program he taught us like dental materials so funny cause everybody was like you know him and I'm like yea he was my hygienist so it was it was fun to be able to work with him again but um he didn't mentor me through it but I guess I could I guess I didn't know I guess that's one thing that now that I have an older daughter and I think about her having like a mentor I guess when I was that age I wasn't really thinking about a mentor or somebody to help me through it I just was pretty more self-independent about like doing everything on my own and that type of thing.

Right, right. Good for you. Um the other thing I wanted to ask you was how did you decide to go to Columbus State? I mean, you said you applied to OSU and Columbus State so was it convenience that they were located near where you live?

yea, it was convenience I was already attending Ohio State like my undergrad and then um it's just their GPA at the time I was kind of having a little harder time at Ohio State um my freshman year so their GPA requirement was a little bit higher.

Oh OK

than Columbus state

Right, right

so I just decided to go to Columbus state more out of convenience and just more out of um being able to take a couple courses to just keep my GPA stable um so I can be able to get into the program

right, right

cause here was some courses I was having to take at OSU that was kind of tanking my GPA a little bit so I just decided to transfer over

**OK and then tell me a little about your experience as a dental hygienist today.
What kind of office do you work in and how do you like the profession?**

Um, I work in both a private practice and a Medicaid office, um it's the same owner but he only works at the private practice and he has another doctor that he has come in and work in the Medicaid office so I do both I get both worlds which is kind of hard it's kind of hard sometimes but I guess it's a good it kind of keeps you um it keeps you in the know about so much different things that's going on out there cause I guess when you are in one setting all the time you're kind of like blindsided about like other things that are going on... so it definitely keeps you up to date on how the world is changing as far as um in our Medicaid office we see a lot of um international patients and patients from all over um so you know it gives you know about being more diverse and um so many different languages and it's kind of hard too because it's like a language barrier so so we have somebody that speaks Spanish, we don't have somebody that speaks you know Napali and different things like that so sometimes it can be kind of hard but I think I still enjoy being able to help them a little bit that I was able to and sometimes they're really grateful so I think it's a little bit more different than private practice like when you are in private practice people are like telling you what to do like sometimes with their mouth um you know with other patients who have never been to the dentist before they're just like more thankful to see the drastic difference in their teeth um before and after so..

So maybe you feel a little more appreciated.

Yea I told one of my coworkers that like sometimes I feel more appreciated where I work on Wednesday and Fridays in the Medicaid office because it's just they're more thankful and then at the other office sometimes it is more of the demands like don't touch this don't touch that you know ...that have been coming to a dentist all their life so you know they become more Americanized (laughs) on um you know say what you want, get what you want type thing

Right, so would you say your career is what you thought it would be as a dental hygienist?

Um, I would say it was different I think we all kind of like have these thoughts of like this like perfect office, you know the perfect doctor and you know get along with all your coworkers so it's definitely different than I thought it would be um so I would say it's different I'm learning um a lot of new things... about the field you know just in going in and feeling like ...this perfect setting and stay there you know ..like my hygienist he was at his office for 25 years I think but it's so funny cause I recently seen him and he wasn't there anymore would you ever have thought you would leave and go somewhere else he was like yea, I guess you would eventually do something different.

When you talk to some of your colleagues about dental hygiene do they have similar experiences as you do as far as working in various offices and facing some of the same challenges?

Um, some, yea, some friends I have kept in touch with they have had some challenges and kind of had to you know explore different options um to get to that place that they want I've heard about some people that we've gone to school with that just had that perfect office or they already worked there and their doctor kept them on and then it was just... felt like that type of perfect setting where like they're great they're happy where they are... So I feel like... Some people who have had that that type of atmosphere and they always wanted. And some people were like no that's not what I thought it was going to be... a little bit of both.

And how are the employment opportunities where you are?

Um It's kind of up and down It's like when I was subbing for about a year and um it was like really busy sometimes and then it's really slow and then it's like now that I've finally gained a full time job it's like I'm getting so many calls that they need so many people. So it's just really hit or miss that's why I say like when people I worked someplace for 6 years and a lot of management changes so I decided to leave there and um a lot of people were like are you crazy I'm like dentistry goes up and down I'm like... it might be slow right now but I'm gonna eventually I'm going to be so busy so it kind of like balances itself out a little bit

Right, oh that's good. Um has your experience as a dental hygienist um influenced you or not influenced you to encourage other people to become dental hygienists?

Um, I think it's influenced me to encourage people It's so funny you should say that because I was at an event at my younger daughters school on Friday night and I had a girl um her older sister that my daughter's friends with she was saying how she was in school and going for nursing and she was thinking of different things I was like you could always look into dental hygiene I was letting know about the goods and bads of it the pros and cons maybe I'll check into it You know I think it encourages me you know talk to people about it since I am in it. I don't tell people no stay away don't come dentistry is not a great thing I don't say that because I think it could be that way in nursing. I meet a lot of nurses that say I'm tired and burned out it can go both ways.

There are some good things like you don't have to work evenings and weekends there are some differences.

One thing I wanted to talk to you about was the my whole study is the lack of minority representation in the dental hygiene profession... statistics to you first of all in 2013 and 14 there were a total of 4.3% Black dental hygiene students 11.5 %

Hispanic and 71.7% white Caucasian students enrolled in the 334 accredited dental hygiene programs in the United States. What do these statistics mean to you about the profession?

Wow, Wow. I guess I didn't realize that the numbers were that low, um but I guess it means to me that um we are underrepresented in that field and maybe that's why so many people aren't as comfortable um I would say like when that I guess I never thought of dentistry before because when I was going to my actual dental office it was predominately white um employed and ... and maybe I didn't picture myself in that atmosphere or you know I didn't you know see myself fitting in so maybe people feel they don't fit in. But then I have a teen age daughter and she thinks that it's just gross the worst thing ever who would want to work in somebody's mouth that's just disgusting I don't see how someone could do something like that. I guess it means to me like it's definitely something I feel like we should be considering more um so I guess it's just a matter of people getting the word out and then also and our faces um being displayed more so other kids can look up and see like oh ok somebody that looks like me cause I think that sometimes that resonates more with kids like OK so somebody looks like me cause sometimes I go to certain places and um even certain little kids go Oh you work here? and they look at me like my skin color like Oh I never seen a black and I never seen a black person work here before. and I'm like ok you so I guess it's just people...

Did you feel that way when you were going through school?

No, I didn't when I was in school I didn't think of it and I think I had one other girl who was in school with me that was African American and I just I didn't think about it I think we had an odd class because we had two black kids and we had 2, 3 males which is not a lot of males I don't know I didn't think about it I guess, but as I got out in the field and working then I think it started resonating more with me like Oh. You know I think for a long time it got like to be like a certain it was like like a certain type... like I've heard with some offices like I know this is like a stereotype but they'll say your doctor wants all blond all blond employees you know a certain way fit a certain type of you know

Right

...picture you know that's what they call a dental assistant or hygienist ...look like, so I definitely think it's changing but maybe it was that type of you know stereotype ...of what that person should look like, this is what they should you know, so I think it's definitely changing but I didn't think about it in school but as I got out of school I started to kind of see like...Oh...

Laughs, I'm kind of unique

you know...it's different,

Right, right

yea

One of the things we use to recruit students into the program, um cause I teach at Youngstown State University so one of the things we use to recruit students are open house programs, um brochures, we do campus tours, what do you think about the effectiveness of those techniques to get more minorities into the profession?

I'm not for sure... maybe that's what it is to like how is that information getting out to youth like is it getting put to their high school um because it seems like for me sometimes and I have younger cousins and family members like if their parents are signing them up for something it's something like that want to be actually doing something a hands on thing maybe they are coming for a presentation and they actually get to be a part of something. I'm not sure how willing they would be like it's just an open house and their parent has to come with them and they're like the parent can't come my mom can't come. I've tried to get my cousin who is a senior this year trying to get some opportunities so it was like mom had to work dad can't bring me so maybe I think maybe if the family you know family support isn't there it might be a little bit harder as far as like getting the word out that that's something that's going on to recruit other kids. I don't know I guess just kind of like going in ...the city where a lot of kids are you know considering is it talked about during career time cause when I was in school and we were asked to do career checkup I don't remember seeing dental as a you know I think we were told more like nurses or a doctor you know.

Right, right

So I don't know

Do you have any other ideas for how we could um you know recruit more high school students into the field?

Um, I don't know I'd have to think about that. The only thing I was just thinking was um...to maybe have where I don't know I'm trying to think about it but that was the only thing I was thinking maybe have like a um my daughter gets an e-mail sometimes from cool tech girls cause they're trying to get kids more into like technology

Oh Ok. Right.

But like they'll invite them to a presentation and have food and food is like the thing where they have them come they present things to them and then they actually do a hands on type of ...project

so maybe inviting students to dental hygiene clinic and let them actually see what we do

Yea,

Yea that's a good idea. It's interesting with dental schools, um the dental schools' accreditation mandates that dental schools achieve appropriate levels of diversity among their faculty, their staff and their students. They also have to engage in ongoing efforts to attract and maintain minority students, faculty you know everyone from diverse backgrounds. So dental schools are mandated to have these policies in place so they have more diversity in dentistry. Um, talk to me about how you feel about uh dental hygiene schools having to have standards like that.

Um, I mean I guess it would be good it would push more programs to reach out and put more effort out to get kids from different backgrounds to be interested. I guess that wouldn't hurt to you know have to meet certain standards and guidelines because I think that um it provides more access to care. you know...races and minorities that may feel more comfortable with us having the Spanish speaking um assistant at our office more Spanish speaking patients are more comfortable, so maybe that would help you know um ...they're ok with like you know there are all different races at our office but to actually have somebody that you can at one point relate I guess that is you know that could be ok to have that standard to have to meet at least have a certain % or certain requirement, as far as minorities I would feel ok about that I wouldn't feel like ...

OK, well thank you for all this valuable information. Is there anything else you would like to add before we finish?

No, just thank you for I guess doing this um research to be able to expose more minorities to the field I mean I think that's a great thing I definitely still talk to kids about it like have you checked it out because I guess if they haven't even looked into it they don't even know what their... I think even sometimes for my daughter too I be like you never even know you could be different things some people think like blood I think you're going to see more blood as a nurse or a doctor than you are as a hygienist.

Right, and a lot of it depends on where you work, some work environments are you know just wonderful you know like I said you don't have to work evenings or weekends, so that's a big difference

Yea, yea, that's that's true I guess that could be the thing to let people know you can have more... and that was the thing that kind of sold me on it too like you know the flexibility that you could work couple days a week, I have a friend she works one day a week she has four kids she loves it to be able to go in one day a week you could have that flexibility I could work a couple days and make really good money.

Well, I'm going to go ahead and let you get back to work and I'm going to stop the recorder.

Transcript #16

OK [REDACTED] I will go ahead and start the interview. Is it OK if we tape record our conversation?

Yes, Maam.

OK, Alright so my first question for you [REDACTED] : What was your first recollection when you decided to become a dental hygienist?

My first recollection um I've always had a passion for dentistry or a curiosity at a very young age.

(Silence)

Ugh, then it always piqued my curiosity...Are you there?

You kind of disappeared for a couple seconds there.

Oh, I'm going back this way. Are you there?

Yep. I can't I haven't I didn't hear you say anything. Are you walking?

I'm going to stand out in the hallway.

OK

Is this better?

Yes, that's a lot better. Go back and tell me about your first recollection. Was it a ...You said you were younger. Was there a particular person who interested you in the profession

No, actually just going to my dentist I had a fascination for the profession

OK

I remember at age 6, 7 I was very young telling my dentist I wanted to grow up and be just like him. So there really wasn't one person ... I guess he would be the person. [REDACTED] um it was just really working with my hands and being fascinated with what he did and how intimate you were with your patients um but also once I got into dentistry I started out as a dental assistant you seeing the appreciation and the confidence you give people after retaining dental service and came in feeling one way and at the end of the process felt a totally different way about themselves boosting confidence and giving people better aesthetics. I'm not sure that quite answers

Yea, that does. So when you got out of high school is that when you actually went into dental assisting.

Yes Maam, Yes, Maam,

...well actually I worked for a little while. I struggled with college, um went to Kent State University, uh things didn't work out there for me um then came home started working figured how can I get back on track becoming a dentist well let me start at the bottom become a dental assistant. Became a dental assistant ugh around the age of 20, 21 I become 2000 I became a dental assistant. Graduated from high school in 97 became a dental assistant in 2000 and um I've been in the dental field ever since.

Did the dentist that um you went to that encouraged did you would consider him a mentor did he follow you along as you went? Or did he just give you that initial idea?

Actually he played no role in ugh in my progress becoming a dental assistant and dental hygienist. Played absolutely no role. I would have to give all that credit to [REDACTED] who was the dental assistant instructor at Cuyahoga Community College. Now that conversation or that relationship ugh was mended through [REDACTED] I called Cuyahoga Community College I was actually looking at Cleveland Institute Ugh which is a dental medical/dental ugh institute that educates people to become a medical assistant, a dental assistant it may have ugh I can't think of it but they had a lot of uh different medical fields.

OK.

Um it was an education facility geared toward um the health care professional and I reached out to them and I just wanted to make sure everything they were telling me was lining up with my future steps so I called Cuyahoga Community College and made sure the credits would transfer and [REDACTED] answered the phone and expressed to me that they did not accept credits from that institute and it was an unaccredited institute.

Oh, OK.

And she says you know we have a dental assisting program here it's um one semester, um you do some hours you have to do but it's a lot less expensive and it's also a lot less time than I would have been enrolling myself in with Cleveland Institute. So she says she's going to put me in touch with [REDACTED] and from there uh the rest is history. We actually still in touch... I just got back from Cleveland recently and we did breakfast and she is still very instrumental pushing me forward toward dental school today.

Oh good, Laughs.

That's a very long story.

Are you still thinking about dental school?

Actually no.

OK, Laughs.

Actually I'm gearing myself toward nursing now

Oh Ok

To become a CRNA, so that's where I'm at.

OK, wonderful, um let me go to my next question. Um How did you make, um I already asked you that question. Tell me a little about your experience as a dental hygienist today. What type of setting do you work in?

OK. I work in private practice. I graduated hygiene school in 2007. My first job was in a pediatric clinic, [REDACTED] say a high, it's a Medicaid practice. You see a lot of patients. I like to describe it as an assembly line. Um, really not geared toward standard of care type of atmosphere um

Right.

Really doesn't allow you to bond with the patient. Get em in get em out. So I did that for. I worked there for about a year shortly after that I had a job offer here in Maryland. I up and relocated from Cleveland here for um the same office the same type of setting. I moved here started working with a company called [REDACTED] the exact same as [REDACTED] um the only thing that may be different is paperwork. But the exact same setting, Medicaid patients, underserved community, large volume of patients. I did that for about three years and after that I really got burned out.

yea

And that's all I knew when I moved here I didn't have any family or friends me leaving that office was ...really stepping out on faith

mmhmm

I didn't have anything lined up but one of the doctor's husbands had his own practice and was actually ugh actually in a place where he was looking for a hygienist and I wound up working for them. So, I did uh work with him for about two years and uh ethically we didn't match up so that's the reason why that relationship was uh...

Can you talk to me about that?

Yes, he was very much about ugh money

OK, production

Didn't really care, Yes, production uh and standard of care really, really sucked and what really, really teed me off one day is the patient came in had a lot of occlusal cavities. Patient had um a Medicaid based insurance and he wanted me to seal the teeth.

Oh

So and I went back and I checked with my explorer just to make sure I was getting a stick in each tooth and I was and I said I think I'm getting a stick in each tooth and he said go ahead and seal them up and I said I think there may be a cavity involved so he's like well I checked em so and I didn't get a stick, it could just be the stain go ahead and seal it up and uh we'll see him back in 6 months we'll reevaluate him. I um this was rampant decay, this is molars, premolars in all four quads had occlusal caries. Uh, at the end of that day I asked him could I could talk to him when everybody left and I expressed how much that bothered me and the fact that he wouldn't even both to get up and go recheck the patient to reassess the patient um and I told him that you know I got into this field to really help people not to do any you know it's not benefitting the patient. What he told me was that when you um

(inaudible)

..let me get his words right, there's some things you're going to have to do in order to uh keep your head above water, um some don't give you the reimbursement that you would need especially with the Medicaid insurance he says you know I can do filling on that kid and they're only going to pay me 6 or 12 dollars I don't know um

wow, well **he was honest**

He said so I figured if we did the sealants and we saw him back that would offset the reimbursement that I'd would get, so we're close, we're nearing what I would actually charge a patient if we just go do the sealants first and then do the fillings. so I said I can understand however that's really not why I got into the field and it kind of bothers me morally because I have to sleep with myself at night I don't like that on my conscience.

Wow, yea,

So we that conversation went the way it went and shortly thereafter I put in my notice and wound up leaving

Um hmm. Was it hard to find another job in your area?

Um, actually no it wasn't um while I was working with him I was working part time um in another office. I was full time with him but part time in another office. We had weird hours so some days we would work until 1 um and then at 1 we just had the rest of the day off and I would go work in another office and I also worked in that same office on the weekends. So when I told them about the story they said hey if you want to work here full time...you're more than welcome and I wound up working in that office and actually I am so happy I joined because it enhanced my skills as a clinician, um furthering my knowledge taught be how to uh really communicate to patients to really get them to accept treatment and start treatment opposed to just sending them on their way.

Right.

So that really enhanced my skill and the practice that I'm in right now has really appreciated and benefitting from that so um

That's nice. that's nice when you feel like you get into a practice when you feel like you can grow professionally, it makes a big difference.

Is your career what you thought it would be today?

Um Is my career what I thought it would be today? That's really a tough question, answer I really never thought of that. Um I'm gonna say yes

OK

I'm gonna say yes, even though I'm in the process of transitioning myself out of it because I still wake up and have an appreciation for it for what I do I don't mind the long hours long days, short lunch breaks, um I don't mind it I greatly appreciate what I do I love what I do especially when you have a setting that you don't mind coming to every day.

So to answer your question, it is what I thought it would be Um and with it evolving when I say evolving they didn't have local anesthesia which now uh they do have and I just recently took that course.

Oh, did you? Good for you.

Um so I would say it is what I thought it would be and maybe a little bit more.

Why are you changing out? Why are you going to nursing?

Well, after doing it for 16 years I just don't feel as though there's that there's no moving up. Either you're on the clinical side or the political side and me I like the clinical side um I just don't feel that how did I describe this. I don't feel that um there's any more room for me to move.

For growth.

Unless I become a dentist, I'm ready to move on to something new something more exciting. I just feel like.

Have you considered teaching?

I gotta be honest with myself I don't know if I have the patience to be a teacher. I know there's a lot that comes with that. If I'm going to be honest with myself I'm not sure that's something I would enjoy

Mmmhmm. But it sounds like you have an awful lot to offer. It may not be what you want to do but I think you have a lot to offer.

With teaching?

Really?

Hmmm

Because you as you said just morally and ethnically I think you are in the profession for the right reasons. It's important for students to hear that and I think you would be a good role model for other students. First of all, we don't have a lot of male students in the profession.

this is true,

and we don't have a lot of African Americans in the profession.

mmhmm

So you know you would be a very good role model. Other people would see you in the profession.

With me uh graduating I was I thought I was the first African American male to come out of the school but there was a gentleman a few years before me that had come out. I want to say his first name was [REDACTED], but to be the second African American male that ...met the gentle man previous um then I moved here to [REDACTED] and I've met about 3 guys. 3 African American guys that live in this area that do dental hygiene.

Oh OK.

Yea, but you're right there's not very many when I go to conferences out of state, Baltimore, Ocean City, 2-3 hours away you still don't see very many black male hygienists.

Right, right. Well just overall I have a couple of statistics to read to you.

In 2013 there were a total of 4.3% Black dental hygiene students 11.5 % Hispanic dental hygiene students. .6% Indian and 71.7% White Caucasian students enrolled in the 334 accredited dental hygiene programs across the United States. What do these statistics mean to you about the profession?

Um, wow, that's a lot to take in.

Are you surprised by those statistics?

Very much, very much, um, I'm going to go inside I have to plug my phone in my battery died. Yes, I am surprised by those statistics makes me wonder um why that is um now is that strictly hygiene or is that overall dental?

No, that's dental hygiene.

For example at Youngstown, where I teach we have only graduated 11 um hygienists with any amount of diversity over the years um it's very White/Caucasian dominated and that's one of the things why I'm doing this study is to you know try to figure out why more we don't get more diversity applicants because when students apply we can't look at that we don't look at their race as part of their application process and we don't interview either so you know we basically look at grades look at GPA so yea it's kind of interesting and I you know I'm hearing from

hygienists like yourself that live in areas like Baltimore or Atlanta that there is a lot more diversity in those areas but in Youngstown, Cleveland, um we're still not seeing a lot of diversity in our dental hygiene programs.

Hmm That uh I really can't answer maybe is it the with any career I always would recommend or would like to hit on have a passion for it um just don't do it for the return on investment

Mmmhmm

Um so I say that to say that maybe some don't have that passion for it but

It's interesting isn't it?

It is that's a tough one to uh to address. I'm really strong thinking about that so uh I really don't have a

One of the things I wanted to look at to in my research is how to encourage more minorities to uh have an interest in the program and apply to the program so some of the things that we use to attract students are open house programs, we have brochures that we send out about our program, we do some campus tours um what do you think about the effectiveness of these techniques?

I think aside from I think the best way in my opinion to reach the minorities is to actually go into those communities go into those schools have after school meetings or if you have like they have lot of career days I've been to so many different schools speaking about my profession and answering questions giving as much knowledge as I can share with the kids about what I do how I became and why

OK

So I think aside from um having the kids come to the school because there's some kids that may just miss it but ...I would have like to have gone to [REDACTED] dental hygiene informational but I didn't know anything about it or I didn't have any way to get there or kids having kids in high school maybe I didn't have someone to watch the child. ongoing in underserved communities instead of leaving it up to them to come to us why don't we go to them.

OK

and going to them may stimulate a higher response and um in minorities that may drive up those numbers that you just shared with me.

Yea, those are good ideas?

Do you talk to some of your patients about becoming dental hygienists, do you influence others to follow this field?

Absolute, absolutely, I had a patient contact [REDACTED], um because she was interested in dental hygiene here however the cost of schooling here is astronomical opposed to the

■■■■. You know I came out of that schools with probably somewhere around 15-20 thousand dollars in debt where as you have people graduate dental hygiene school here 60,000 dollars in student loans in debt. One young lady I was speaking she had two little boys she would strongly consider it she contacted ■■■■, the cost of living in Cleveland is a lot less and to come to Cleveland take the two-year program, stay with a family member, friend or even if she had to have her own place for two years she'd be saving a lot of money

I think you're right. That's a good point.

So to answer your question, yes, definitely I express my love for the field and encourage kids and patients I always say hey what's your plan you do what do you want to go to college for, you want to be dentist don't you so I'm always encouraging asking you know I don't like to put a lot of pressure on them when I grew up my dad put a lot of pressure on me to become a carpenter or electrician and it was the farthest thing from my mind land I'm glad I chose the career path I chose just because what it means to me and the work that went into it.

Getting back to ■■■■ how was your educational experience? Did you ever feel um like you were the minority did anybody treat you different? How would you characterize your educational experience from that aspect.

My educational experience was phenomenal there was nothing I would change about that. My experience there was amazing as well, there's nothing I would change there either. There were three other African Americans in my class but a few other ethnicities as well

Oh OK

The majority I think we graduated might have been 22 of us we started with 27 um 22 of us graduated uh 3 African American of the 22 and a couple other ethnicities as well so we had a melting pot in our class

OK

There's nothing I would change about it. I think just overall me being the African Male dental hygienist there's a lot of things I have learned that I have to be cognizant of. One being I'm 6-3. I'm 6-3 250 pounds I'm a fairly large guy um just my size alone some people might be slightly intimidated by so in talking to uh I had an experience where I had a debate with one of my instructors and the debate was about SADHA the SADHA dues the SADHA fees they wanted us to pay 60 or 75 dollars and it wasn't in our handbook.

that's the Students American Dental Hygienists Association.

Right, but as a dental student it's a lot of money of which I didn't have and um I was just basing it off our handbook they told us the handbook was our bible and that everything all the guidelines are in our handbook our student handbook well this wasn't one of those things that was in there and we just went back and forth and I was just like I don't have

the money to pay the student dues and I didn't know that was something I wasn't aware that fee was something I was responsible for. At the end of the conversation I was described as being passive aggressive and I just kind of took note of that and the woman is fairly small woman have you ever met Ms. [REDACTED],

yes, I have

so you know she is a very small lady so the instructor is her size and um so I was described as being passive aggressive when it was merely a difference of opinion

You were just challenging the guidelines

that's it

mmmhmm

So I took that and it still sits with me til today so whenever even when I'm having conversation with a patients patient may not agree with, or they may not necessarily agree with uh hearing that they're not flossing you know make sure my body language matches with my tone and my facial expression.

Right

I keep all of these things into play while also not being overbearing while also still coming off friendly in a non-intimidating way because of my size, my complexion, because of my uh...my and tone all of these things come into play when I try to educate because I know how easy it is to get that misconception of being threatening just off of based off my tone or my physical attributes

Right

Um, another thing I wanted to mention to you was in dental schools um they have different accreditation standards than dental hygiene does so for dental schools in order to increase diversity they have to show that they are achieving appropriate levels of diversity among students, faculty and staff dental schools also have to engage in ongoing efforts to recruit and retain students from diverse backgrounds and evaluate that process.

Talk to me about how you feel about mandating policies to increase diversity, you know like in dental hygiene.

Well, that's actually a great question. I'm glad you asked that question, it takes me back to my own experience. Cuyahoga Community College doesn't do a very... I don't think they actually do a very good job of recruiting African Americans within that curriculum. the way they all said those numbers is they also include the African American who are incorporated in the dental assisting class. so if you ever look at the demographics their Whites versus blacks there's dental assisting students that increases those African American numbers when really in that program there's not very many at all and the class above me there was only 1 African American student female in the class above me and

the class coming behind me there was one that was one that actually graduated there was a gentleman in the class but he wound up leaving in that first semester first couple weeks but they don't do a very good job and the numbers they put out aren't indicative of what's really going on in the hygiene alone...graduating class curriculum they incorporate the dental assisting with the dental hygiene...

Better than what it is... um yea, that's one of the things... when we accept students in to

You know that's one of the top criteria when you apply to a dental hygiene program and what your grades are um you know do you think there are other things we should be looking at to um increase minority populations in dental hygiene?

Um, other than grades other than I would say I would say how about interview the student, interviewing the student why did they get a C other than a B in microbiology um you know do you have a support system at home are you a single mom trying to raise two kids or a child um there's more to a student than just their grades

mmmhmmm

I think that you can have just as many successful um students but some people may struggle in certain areas it doesn't make them um a less

qualified yes

qualified yes, thank you a less qualified student someone who has a support system a better home structure who didn't have to work whereas this person had to hold down a full time job or a part time job to keep a roof over their head or keep their kids together so on and so forth so I think there's more to it than just the grade in itself. I actually, when you asked the question I just went to an informational at George Washington University for the nursing program and part of their admission process is they ask for letters of recommendation but they also ask for uh the person to write why they want to be a nurse and not only that why they may have struggled in some areas as opposed to other areas

OK

And the lady actually brought a valid point you know I like she's on the admission committee and she said she liked when students are very honest. There are students that had to take online courses because they couldn't make it to the university or it was more geared to their needs well students who struggle with online courses versus students who excel in the classroom. so a person is taking an online course and doesn't do as well as someone who is in the classroom are they less qualified to be in the program?

Right.

She says she takes that all into consideration which I think some our dental community should possibly do the same because there's more to an individual than just the grade.

Yes, that's some good advice. I appreciate you sharing all of that with me.

So is there anything else you would like to add before I stop the recorder.

Um, no but I would really like um I think definitely the best idea that I just shared with you was actually going into the communities and uh finding those reaching out to those minorities educating them opposed to them coming to the school. Some will come to the school and that's great I think we'll get better results if we go into the communities and really ...why we do what we do and the passion we have for it and I think that could appeal to students who only look at what they see on TV.

Right.

People they interact with very often I underserved communities they even go to the dentist

actually have that working knowledge what a dental hygienist does what a dental hygienist uh the livelihood of a dental hygienist as well. I think those are all I think that's actually I think that's actually a really good idea.

I think that's a good idea. I'm going to stop the recorder but stay on the line for a minute.

Transcript #17

What did you say I'm sorry? Go ahead

I'm going to go ahead and start the recorder. Is it OK if we tape record our conversation?

Yes, that's fine

OK.

So, [REDACTED], I was hoping you could tell me, what was your very first recollection when you decided to become a dental hygienist.

Um, You, mean why did I?

Ummhm right, what was the experience, were in a dental office, did you know someone in the profession? Go back to your first memory of when you thought you wanted to be a dental hygienist

Actually I wanted to go to dental school. My plan was to go to dental school and I was two years into my bachelor's program in education and um I decided while I was going to school to be a teacher I actually wanted to go to dental school. And...

What school were you going to?

OSU

Oh, OK.

And so I switched my major because I needed the quickest way to complete my bachelor's. That's the reason I went into dental hygiene.

So you thought you were going to go into dental school and then you decided to switch over to dental hygiene instead because it was shorter?

Quicker, quicker path to dental school because I had already started into you know my bachelor in education and then um I decided to do science education and decided that hygiene would be a good entry to dental school

Right. Did you have um say a mentor or someone that talked to you about dental hygiene? How did you first hear about the profession?

Um, well, actually I didn't in my senior year in high school actually the summer before my senior year in high school I uh participated in a minority um health careers summer program a research , it was called a research apprenticeship program at OSU and in that time you were able to explore the various health ...degrees and it's a great program at that time is when I I um started thinking about dentistry then, then I went through my senior year in high school and I really liked science so I thought I would do education and then you know after being in education realizing I really didn't want the K-12 route so I went ahead and go to dental school.

OK and then once you went to dental hygiene that was at Ohio State University and after you graduated um you decided not to continue to dental school. Is that right?

Well, I actually finished my bachelor's in education my dad said that was the only way he would pay if I finished. I finished my bachelor's in education, and then I um so my senior year in hygiene school I had an opportunity to teach in the first year clinic first year clinic and um and that was with sophomore students in hygiene and I also had an opportunity to uh teach science to pre-health students so I was in the college of health science and I got a job teaching um you know all the pre-nursing, pre-therapy students I taught biology... and uh (inaudible) and I loved it and so um I decided in my senior year of hygiene school in dental school I really did love education but college education was what I wanted to do.

And what year did you graduate from Ohio State?

In 94.

94, OK, I was 84 from Ohio State Laughs

Perfect.

So um tell me a little bit about your experience as a dental hygienist today if you would.

Well I left full time practice as a dental hygienist I actually haven't practiced in a couple of years now and as you know I was a full time hygienist for years then I went to graduate school, um I have a couple of master's degrees I did that mostly worked in public health in health education, a faculty member at a college and got a position as a department chair at Stark State and I did that for 9 years before I uh moved back home which was Columbus and I got a job with the Ohio Department of Education doing curriculum specifically in all health sciences so I stopped working generally full-time in dental hygiene back in 2011 when I moved back to Columbus um and really up until about 2 years ago I was a sub for many people, friends and things like that.

Right. And are you still with the department of education?

no actually I had in 2012 I got a job with Ohio Health and I was doing curriculum so developing curriculum for all of the uh education programs for the health care providers at the hospital system.

Oh, Ok, is that where you still are?

Yes

Alright, that's interesting. Um, so, would you say that your experiences in dental hygiene are a little bit different than your colleagues or people that you graduated with?

Yea, I think one thing that was different for me is people knew that they wanted to be in dentistry and I didn't know that when I was younger I also always you know I loved dental hygiene and I loved the public health education aspect of it um of course I loved clinical but I really even as a practicing hygienist and that educator I really questioned the hygienist keep going make sure all doors are open to them they can recognize there is more than just clinical of course friends who are of course in clinical that is really all they ever wanted to do and I knew my senior year in hygiene school that there was so much more that I wanted to do and I was always trying to find a way to use my hygiene education in a different way. Ah and I've been able to do that.

Yes, we have a lot in common cause I've been teaching for over 25 years. Um and how has your experience as a dental hygienist influenced or not influenced you to encouraged other people to become dental hygienists?

Well I think it's a great career um I think that it's harder for me because um even when I was a educator and a faculty member and a department chair I always um felt like it was a great career for someone especially if they wanted to work part-time and be a mom, but I knew that wasn't an option for me um and so one of the things is that (inaudible)career and it's really hard to work in small business as a career woman um and so I've always encouraged people to do that but I've always told them to be mindful that you know really have to work hard to be a full time hygienist for 25 years right in a clinical setting so that's the reason I have always encouraged people to do other things because ..go back and get EFDA, look at public health hygienist, education look at sales making sure you are uh open to opportunities and that's different than some of my friends always wanted to be a hygienist and always wanted to work in clinical.

Do you get many young people that ask you about your profession?

Yea, I think what I get mostly and always how did I get the other stuff besides hygiene, most people think they're surprised I'm a hygienist especially because I'm not working in hygiene education any more. Most people ask people about my career but most people ask me how did I make my career more than just hygiene.

Can we switch gears for a little bit as you know my dissertation is on the lack of minority representation in dental hygiene and I'm going to tell you a couple of statistics and these are from 2013-2014 in the 334 accredited dental hygiene programs in the United States there were a total of 4.3% black dental hygiene students, 11.5% Hispanic and 71.7% white Caucasian students enrolled in all those programs. What do these statistics mean to you about the profession of dental hygiene?

Well, it's kind of what I've lived the last 25 years it's always been I think that's one of the reasons why I didn't see it as a career when I was younger, I still feel that now so you know there's just no one else like me and when I see someone like me I'm always surprised by it and I always want to hear how what their path was because it usually not just someone around who did that job um you know I get very few non-white hygienists whose dads were hygienists, you know very rare right, so that just means my path is a little bit different but um I think it's harder when there is no one else like you I think we see that with any case any profession and you're the only woman it's more difficult when you are surrounded by men that doesn't mean your experience is bad it just means it's different.

Right, right

Yea

Before you go to the next question can I interrupt you? Can I call you back in just a few minutes I'm going to have the Dr. look at my son's foot?

Yep, that would be fine I'll be here

OK, I'll call you in a little bit.

Bye

Part 2 starts here:

OK, so I'm going to go ahead and start the recorder since we're um talking again and when we stopped talking before we were talking about the low amount um low enrollment of minority students in dental hygiene and I asked you what the statistics meant to you about the profession, and you briefly talked about how you weren't surprised because that's something you have experienced over your career

mmhmm

and so one of the things in dental hygiene schools and you know because you were a director dental hygiene programs will typically look at academics grade point average or grades in science courses things like that um you know how do you feel about using academics as that number one priority when selecting students for dental hygiene?

Well, you know what we've learned especially in Ohio where there's a lot of two year programs um a 4.0 doesn't really equal the quality of the student some students take one or two courses at a time over time versus a student who um you know takes multiple courses as well as many of the community college students which most of our programs in Ohio either parents or they're not all straight out of high school so there's a lot of factors I think that go on into what makes your academic record or your GPA um so I actually think that I would not want them to make decisions based on you know race but I don't know if academics should be the only deciding factor I think that's where we fall down.

Right.

We used to have interviews we used to look at things like service those things that we used to take into account um and I believe that would make more of a diverse pool um but I actually think we need to reach farther back in the schools so that different people actually see that this is a career option for them.

Right.

A lot of times they don't even have that uh you know we should not wait for them to come to us I guess

So you know on that topic what how do you think we could because right now I know at YSU we use um open house programs, you know we pass out brochures, we sent out brochures and information about our program, uh we do campus tours to recruit students um, you know how do you feel about the effectiveness of these techniques?

well you know it's kind of difficult because again we're waiting for them to get on our campus and our look at our college campus population is not as diverse as it used to be and so we see all kinds of things that go into play when we pursue to apply um you actually have to go outside of your school probably into your areas into your high schools, to the various programs

Right. What other kinds of things do you think we can use to recruit um more minority students because like at YSU and that's one of the reasons I did this program, we just don't get the applicants because we don't look at their race when we're accepting students so you know a lot of people I interviewed said high schools going out into the high schools would be a good idea. Could you think of any other outreach activities to bring you know to make more minorities aware of the profession?

I think there's programs like um I was in where it's just exposing minorities to various careers I mean my father was an engineer I went to a you know upper middle class rural high school, pretty large high school and um majority white and so and I had never thought about dentistry and dental hygiene as a field I knew about dentistry just from that program I participated so if colleges are going to offer more outreach programs to youth and not just to high schoolers but younger people and obviously you would want to reach out to those who are potentially going to go to college so you know academically inclined minority students would be a great area to reach especially those who are in science programs or some of the tech programs and even looking at nursing programs uh high school tech programs, LPN, STNAs a lot of them don't even realize that it's an option.

Right. Right. I think you are right about that. Um, you are probably aware of this but um the commission on dental accreditation for dental schools um actually does have standards that they have to achieve appropriate levels of diversity among it's students faculty and staff um they go even further to say they have to engage in ongoing systemic and focused efforts to attract and retain students faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds um how do you feel about the idea of policies like this to mandate increasing diversity?

Well, it's funny because my doctoral dissertation is on um the lack of minorities uh enrollment in doctoral programs medical, dental um physical therapy and that.

Oh interesting.

They all have those standards but it's hard to hold people accountable for those standards and I think unfortunately even when you complete your accreditation document and and you've replied to those questions um you have to have evidence of effort but if your effort isn't changing the outcomes you need.. there's not a pressure to change your effort, there's a pressure to have effort or activities around increasing diversity. I think it would be great if we had (inaudible) actually have a similar standard but I think at the end of the day the accreditation standards would help but the actual action that's going to make a difference you know can't be again working on my own campus um I need to reach back a little bit farther to even have people see this as a career option because Its kind of scary to look at the curriculum for dental hygiene it's very much the same as nursing,

Yes, it is

It's scary for someone who hasn't thought about it. Most nurses of all races even though they have a problem with race in their programs people have thought about that for years and years Yea, when you think about being a nurse they don't think about being a dental hygienist.

Yes, the lack of role models there just aren't they aren't going to the dentist and seeing hygienists of different races, different colors, different ethnicities So, um well that was really the gist of my questions um was there anything else you wanted to add about um this topic?

No I don't think so, what made you choose this topic?

Well, actually I had a student this was about 4 years ago and she was the only African American student in our program and I looked at her one day and I said how did you get here? it just made me think like of course my dad was a dentist like you said earlier, you're white, your dad's a dentist and of course you're going to go into dental hygiene. I looked at her and said How did you get here? I had a long conversation with her and found out her dentist was a black female and it got me to thinking you know what I think that minorities have to have some type of role model in order to choose this profession and. I also thought a lot about how you know faculty members um you know I don't think we're always real sensitive to how difficult it is for an African American student coming into our program.

Mmhmm

She opened my eyes to a lot of things, you know, in fact she came in on the first day of class I was her instructor, it was 8:00 Monday morning, and she said she walked in and she was late, there was a sea of white students, blonde hair and she thought oh no how am I going to do this and she said I looked at her and said welcome come have a seat and she told me from that moment on that everything was going to be OK, I'm not saying that to pat myself on my back, but any other given day I could have been running late myself I could have been in a bad mood, so it just made me realize that we all need to be a little bit more aware of um the experiences that our dental hygiene students have especially our minority students and making them feel welcome and being able to retain them in our program

Well and you're gonna see or hear if you haven't already that um all young people base their careers on things they've seen or heard and fortunately because there's not a lot of minority health care professionals in general the chances of a minority seeing someone like me in a certain career are going to be reduced and so if you think about the average you know young female um most hygienists and of course being very stereotypical are

young, very pretty, they have um some sort of exposure to orthodontia or some sort of you know regular dental care um in their life and unfortunately a lot of minorities have not had a history of um orthodontia it's not a given and so because the majority of the populations are just they don't have those life experiences and so usually we flock to dental hygiene because we've had orthodontia or we had a dentist who said something like what about you so I think you're right on with your thinking because anytime you walk in anywhere and you're different if you're the youngest or the oldest or the only female you have that feeling of you unfortunately if you're a minority student you have that feeling all day.

Right. right, and all through the program so that's one of the things I wanted to find out from her what is your experience and as I talked to minority hygienists I really wanted to find out what was your experience like in dental hygiene school you know so I was able to interview all of the YSU graduates and um I was pleased to hear that they had pretty positive experiences overall, um in fact when you went to dental hygiene school were there other minorities in your class?

No, there was an Asian girl, but that was it. Yea, I think it's been like that as long as I can imagine. The problem is when you get to dental hygiene school you realize there is diversity in other ways not diversity in color different socioeconomic status, mothers, young men, people going straight out of high school getting there making that realization versus having that thought that's the way you should go usually from what I've seen and even the interviews that I've been doing for my dissertation it's been um once you get there you're OK. It's a matter of how or why aren't you getting there what's in place and what are the barriers to keep you from choosing and that's been a lot of my experience too.

Alright. I'm going to stop the recorder for now.

Appendix M

December 15, 2015

Dr. Karen Larwin, Principal Investigator
Ms. Diane Kandray, Co-investigator
Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology & Leadership
UNIVERSITY

RE: HSRC Protocol Number: 054-2016
Title: A Study of Underrepresented Minorities in the Dental Hygiene Profession

Dear Dr. Larwin and Ms. Kandray:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed the abovementioned protocol and determined that it is exempt from full committee review based on a DHHS Category 3 exemption.

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Institutional Review Board and may not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be promptly reported to the IRB.

The IRB would like to extend its best wishes to you in the conduct of this study.

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael A. Hripko
Associate Vice President for Research
Authorized Institutional Official

MAH:cc

c: Dr. Chuck Vergon, Chair
Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology & Leadership

